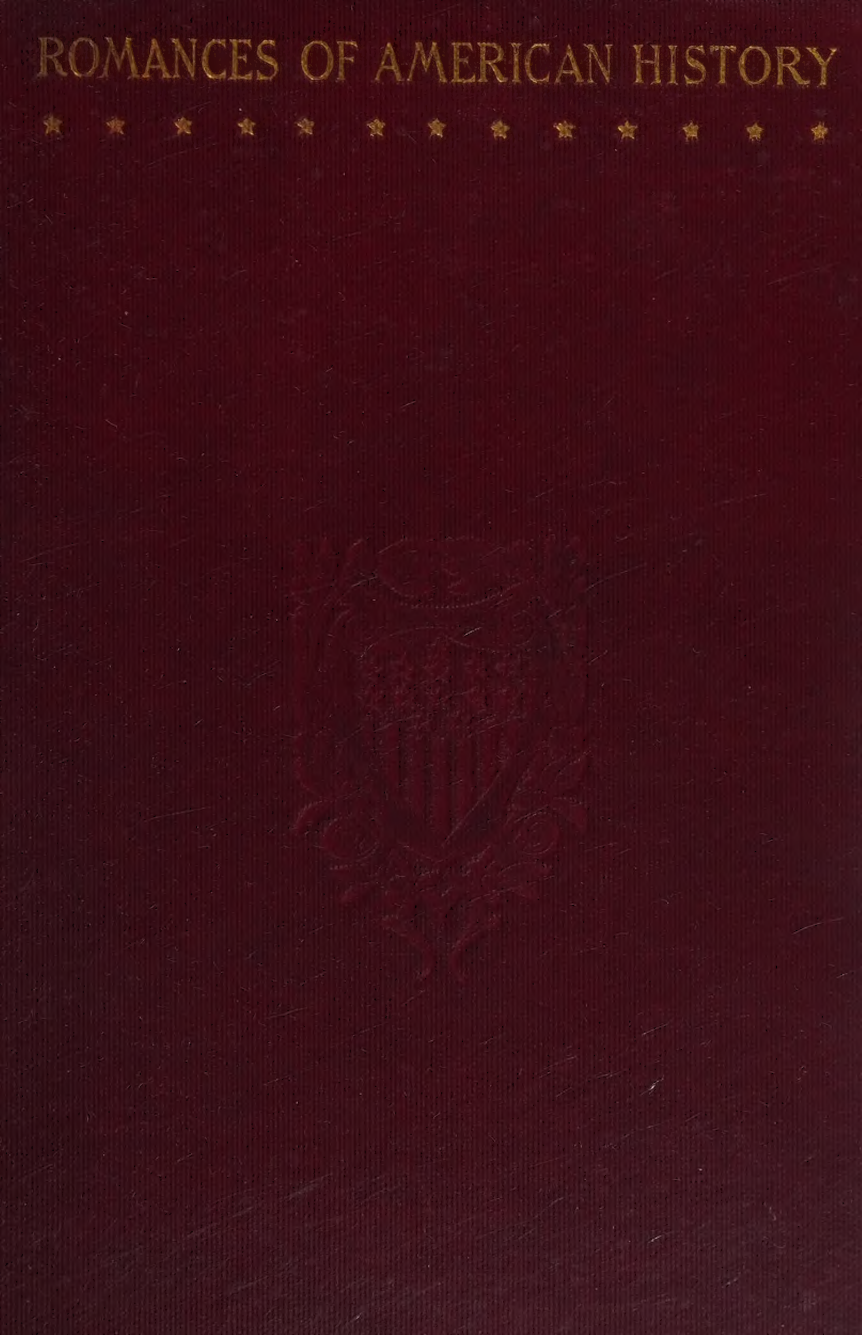
ROMANCES OF AMERICAN HISTORY



Merritt Co. Strong

HEARTS COURAGEOUS

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BY HALLIE ERMINIE RIVES

ILLUSTRATED BY A. B. WENZELL

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TO

FRANCIS BAZLEY LEE

CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
I	Sleeping Fires	1
II	A Forest Demosthenes	24
III	Horse and Away	44
IV	The Freight of the "Two Sisters"	60
V	The Toss of a Coin	83
VI	Two in a Chariot	101
VII	The Making of a Marquis	115
VIII	I Pledge You a Brave Man	129
IX	A Glimpse of Hearts	143
X	Night at Greenway Court	156
XI	When a Woman Dreams	175
XII	Enter, a Poet	185
XIII	Love's Supreme Surrender	205
XIV	The Hour and The Man	215
XV	The Dance Above the Volcano	230
XVI	The Packet	247
XVII	In the Balance	263
XVIII	For Life or For Honor	277
XIX	The Great Sundering	292
XX	The Wake of War	312
XXI	In the Trenches	338
XXII	A Parley with Death	360
XXIII	Behind the Barricade	373
XXIV	The Passing of the Old Regime	391

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CHAPTER I

SLEEPING FIRES

In the year of grace 1774, a climbing sun glowed above his Majesty's Colony of Virginia. It drank the opal mists of the marshes, flecked the fields into shadow-haunted cloth-of-gold, and so unrolled over the old "middle plantation,"—where, a round century before, Bacon and his men had taken the oath against England,—a drowsing, yellow mid-May afternoon.

Two quickened rivers, like silver girdles unclasped, wound through the lowland, from where phantom-far lay the shadows of pines against the color-washed line of sky, sharp-edged and black, in gigantic pointed fronds. The rivers rolled broadly to the sea, holding between them a green valley sweet with the warm perfumes of leaf and flower, and this valley folded to its heart Williamsburg, the gay little capital.

The teal and mallard that winged over from York to James looked down thereon and saw a single

broad thoroughfare shaded by poplars and mulberries, with William and Mary College at one end and the new Capitol at the other. Straggling streets of wide-porched houses bordered with gardens debouched upon this; and spreading away in all directions, like gathered ribbons—by league-long plantation and through broken forest—went tawny, twisting roads.

Along one of these roads, by clumps of rustling laurel, came a great coach with green body and brown cloth, bearing the arms of the Tillotsons of Gladden Hall. A black body-servant rode behind it a-horseback.

The coach, which rolled thumping and swinging ponderously where the way was rugged, pleasantly and lightly where the road was smooth, held a matron and a slender girl. The latter was of that age when nature paints with her richest brush. Her hair was a wave of russet lights, with shadows of warmer brown. Her face, rose-stained, was the texture of a rose. Her mouth, below serious eyes of blended blue, gave a touch of wilfulness. If there was intentness on the brow, so was there languor in the lips, red, half-ripe, the upper short and curved to smile. She was all raptures—all sapphire and rose-gold, against the dark cushion.

Both, as they rode, were silent, looking out

through either wide window upon the warm, scent-steeped glimpses of the way. All along were waving reaches of wheat, where the poppy flung its wrinkled splash of red, or acres of young growing tobacco, wherein sweating slaves toiled listlessly, their songs woven with the undertone of the sluggish stream, slashed by reviling oaths and whip-crackings of a bearish overseer. At the dusty edges of the road thistle and wild honeysuckle scrambled for their breath, and cowslips went spinning yellow ribbons. It was a slumberous land, swathed in a tremulous haze of heat and a wash of sun.

"Anne," said the matron at length, withdrawing her gaze from the window.

"Yes, aunt Mildred."

"Do you intend to treat that boy badly?"

The girl was silent, gazing across the fields, watching the birds' slender flashings in the olive hollows.

"You haven't answered my question."

"What question?"

"Do you intend to treat that boy badly?"

"What boy?" inquired Anne with a sweetness that boded other things.

"Francis Byrd."

"I intend to treat him as I always have. No better, no worse."

"The world has changed since my time," reflected Mrs. Tillotson. "Maids deemed themselves lucky to have one gallant and wasted small time in wedding. Last winter I thought it had been Captain Jarrat. Now he is left for Molly Byrd to make eyes at—the way that woman acts! So I suppose it will be with Francis."

"Let them cease arranging things for me, then," cried Anne. "I will not be put up and bargained for. I will be the subject of no family councils. I will wed when and whom I please."

Her aunt looked a bit startled at the outburst.

"Of course, of course," she assented mildly. "But you don't please. You're eighteen—two years older than I was when I married your uncle. Francis Byrd of Westover is the pick of them all."

"He is a mere boy." Anne's tone held a growing impatience.

"He is not too young," went on Mrs. Tillotson, "to take stock of all you say. But remember, dear, that he is to wear the royal colors now. 'Tis all well enough for you and me to be open Whigs—we don't have to do any oath-taking, and they don't hang us. But king's men can not be so free of tongue."

Anne turned upon her.

"I know the rest of it!" she cried. "Francis is spending time at Alberti's rooms—my fault. Francis is making a friend of Patrick Henry—my fault! Francis has a mind of his own, hasn't he? If he chooses so, well and good. Aunt Mildred, there will be a day when any Virginian will be proud to be a friend of Patrick Henry's!"

The lady shook her head not unkindly. "Your mother over again, Anne," she said. "Loyal and true. Ah, me!"

She was silent, but Anne knew of what she was thinking. After a time she put her hand over and touched the girl's. "Keep your friendships, child, if you like them," she said. "I have naught against Mr. Henry. I like him, and the colonel values him most highly. Only—Byrd is a good lad; too good to be hurt."

"Here is the shop," Anne said presently, as the coach stopped before the sign of a mercer. "I shall drive awhile and return for you in an hour. Won't you take John-the-Baptist with you and buy that turban for Mammy Evaline? What color did she want, John-the-Baptist?" she called to her body-servant.

The lank, loose-jointed, strapping figure of solemn countenance, who sat a sorrel behind the

coach, spurring alongside the window, broke out in wide smiles.

"Mammy want er maz'reen-blue, Mis' Anne. Dat whut I hearn her say."

"Now, don't go over the hour," Mrs. Tillotson reminded, as her niece bowled away, and she sighed as she looked after her.

The coach had entered Williamsburg from the north and now turned into Duke of Gloucester Street, where stood an embowered mansion—the town house of the Byrds of Westover. Here at the gate fluttered two girls who waved hands and called eagerly to the solitary occupant.

"Anne! Anne!" they cried, as the coachman drew up at the horse-block. "Come and tell us what you are to wear to the ball to-morrow."

"I don't know, Betsy," replied Anne, jumping down.

"Pshaw!" rallied Mistress Byrd. "Just as if we believed that, when you know you will be looked at more than the new-arrived Lady Dunmore!"

Anne kissed the younger one—Paulina Cabell, slight, olive-eyed, a pretty, pouting slip of a girl, wriggling to be grown up. "Your eyes are red, sweetheart," said she.

"I have been reading 'Lady Julia Mandeville,'"

Paulina complained. "I never cried so in my life reading a novel. The tale is beautiful, but the ending is horrid!"

"You'll stay to supper, of course," asked Betsy, linking an arm in Anne's. "Brother Frank will fetch you home."

"Not to-day."

"Mother will want to tell you about Frank's royal commission," pursued Betsy. "Come in for a moment. Do."

But the mistress of Westover was otherwise occupied. In fact, the girls entered the wide, cool hall to find a storm lowering.

Mrs. Byrd was not only young, pretty, a second wife, and the possessor of a husband who was one of the governor's Council, but she was conscious of all these things.

Her husband did not remember as often as did she that the gay colonel, his father, had been bosom friend of the learned Charles Boyle in England and a Fellow of the Royal Society. She reminded him frequently of the fact that the old wit had been a scholar and had left to Westover, where he lay under a monument in the garden, the best private library in the Colonies, not even excepting that of Mr. John Bordley of Maryland,—and a garret full

of writings. His portrait hung there—a face as clear and as beautiful as a woman's, framed in a curling peruke of the time of Queen Anne.

As for the present master of Westover, much to her irritation, he cared little more for sight of St. James than for the heaped-up manuscripts in the garret. He contented himself with sitting in the Council chamber at Williamsburg and riding after foxes at Westover, when his gout let him.

Now Mrs. Byrd, consciously impressive, leaned against the white paneling in a posture which showed her plump figure to advantage.

"'Tis high time," she was saying, settling the yellow *point de Venise* at her throat, "that Francis be spoken to about it. (Come in, Anne.)"

The colonel, bowing as gallantly to Anne as his gouty leg propped on a chair would permit, shifted his powdered wig in some discomfort.

"Frank will get no harm from Patrick Henry," he said. "He is too sensible."

"Mayhap you call it no harm, sir," persisted Mrs. Byrd, "to see your son—you a member of the Council—hobbing with that shiftless wag. Sooth, then, I do! The malt-bugs of the tavern are his betters, (No, don't go, Anne!) Francis is daft about him, sir. And the boy's royal commission just come. Oh, 'tis too bad!"

Colonel Byrd straightened his ruffles carefully. "You go to the ball, of course, Anne?" he asked. But his wife was not to be shut off.

"Small preferment," the lady went on, "will Francis get from Lord Dunmore if he continues. The governor keeps himself informed. Every one knows that Patrick Henry is the very front of all these rebel doings! (Yes, you need give me no look, Anne. 'Tis the word I meant to use. Rebel doings. *Rebel* doings!) And for my son—a Willing—to—"

"Zounds! Your son is a Byrd, ma'am!" This from the colonel.

"For my son to associate with a low country demagogue, half the time dressed in buckskins like that shabby burgess from Louisa County you brought to dinner last week, and to go to his crazy meetings at the Raleigh! I thought his stay abroad would have weaned Frank of that. That and the commission. But no! He comes home talking the gibberish of that mealy-mouth Charles Fox that he learned in his dreadful London club. I look yet to see him put off his king's uniform and disgrace us all."

"Pshaw!" said Colonel Byrd, nevertheless uneasily. "Frank's all right. The young blade will take to the army like a duck to water. Zooks!

There is no harm in the Apollo Room. Jefferson is steady enough, and he is ever there."

"Tom Jefferson!" ejaculated the lady. "Think you he is much better? A free-thinker! He and Henry are pitch and toss. La! A squeak of a fiddle, and both of them will dance! Jefferson used to be gay enough with it at Governor Fauquier's musickings. Everybody knows he spends half his time when he is in Williamsburg at the rooms of that papist actor Alberti, and so does Henry. I marvel if Francis does not know him, too."

The colonel sighed. If the truth must be told, the same uneasiness was in his soul. But, being masculine, he did not admit it to his wife.

"I'll lay a crown you'll dance with Master Henry to-morrow night, Anne," volunteered Betsy wickedly.

Anne was looking through the large window, sashed with crystal glass, and there were little blue sparks snapping in her eyes. She made no reply, but under her skirt-edge, her red slipper, like a burnished tongue, went tapping the polished floor.

"I should think, Anne," remarked Mrs. Byrd, with acidity, toying with a rose-jar from which the Duke of Cumberland had once plucked a bud, "that you would have more regard for your bringing up I never had to be reminded of mine."

Mrs. Byrd never looked younger or more handsome than when remembering this. In her soul the soothing and ever-present consciousness of being born a Willing of Philadelphia was embalmed like a fly in amber. If she could have had her way, she would have had the master of Westover dining at four, like the Cadwaladers and Shippens and the rest of the Church of England set there.

"A Tillotson," she continued raptly, "dancing at the burgesses' ball with the husband of a tavern girl!"

Anne turned, her eyes glowing the color of burning brandy.

"And why not?" she cried. "Why not? Mr. Henry is a burgess of Virginia!"

"Aye, a burgess—from the woods! A lick-dish for the country votes!"

"Molly!" Her husband's tone was gathering remonstrance.

"He is a gentleman!" Anne flared, with wrath-dark eyes. "A courteous, honorable gentleman! And he has more in his head than any four of them together."

"Highty-tighty!" exclaimed Mrs. Byrd. "More rebellion, you mean! I should think so."

Looking, Betsy felt a strange wonder. She did

not always understand the other. "Why like you Master Henry as you do, Anne?" she asked curiously.

"Because," cried Anne hotly, "he is a man—a man—not a gallant. He has something more to do than the wits of the Raleigh Tavern or the Jemmy Jessamys of the Assemblies. He knows no fine speeches! He spends no hours twirling a love-lock nor feather-biting over dolorous sonnets, nor petting his ruffles, nor dicing in the Apollo Room! Oh, I grow sick of the macaronis and their silken compliments and dress-swords, all as nice as nanny-hens! And the verses they write in the Gazette! 'Tis mawkish! What do they do? What do they know? The breed of a bird. The latest fashion of pinchbeck shoe-buckles from Annapolis."

Mrs. Byrd sniffed.

"A pity he married the tavern-keeper's daughter!" she said. "You might have had him and his buckskin breeches!"

Betsy laughed at this. "Bless me!" she sighed. "What a blow that had been for Captain Jarrat!" Then, repenting, she ran after Anne as she swept grandly out and threw an arm around her neck.

"Don't be angry, dear," she said. "An you are, I shall feel all to blame!"

Paulina was still at the gate. "Haste!" she

called under her breath. "Here comes Mr. Jefferson."

"Lack!" said Betsy. "Speak of the dev—I mean —there is Mr. Henry with him."

"I marvel Mr. Jefferson likes him!" quoth Anne, a gentle sarcasm ruffling her anger.

Mistress Byrd did not note the tone. "Aye," she responded, "so do I. He has a tongue, though. Father says it has made more trouble for the Colony than all the exclusion acts put together. He looks a very uncouth creature!" she added. "See that moth-eaten hunting cap. And those horrid leather clothes!" This was in a low tone, for the approaching men were come within ear-shot and were even then doffing head-gear to them.

The two were vastly dissimilar. One, the younger, was clad in dark velvet, wore lace and a sword. His fine face was pale with the look of the scholar. The other, walking by his side, with saddle-bags over his arm thrust through the bridle of a lean roan nag, wore hunting dress with a small cap. He looked to be turned thirty-five. His face was keen and sallow, with Roman profile, and his eyes were deep-set under overhanging brows. For the rest, he moved his spare body awkwardly, slouchily, with a rawboned stoop of shoulders, as one at happier ease in the woods than the street. Both bowed

gravely as they came up, the face of the horseman searching the group and brightening suddenly with a flash of smile at sight of Anne.

He passed on, but the younger turned back, nothing loath for a moment of chat.

"Gossiping of the ball to-morrow, I'll swear!" he laughed. "Are the furbelows all chose?"

"Tell us, Mr. Jefferson," cried Betsy Byrd. "Have you seen the new-come beauties? They say Lady Dunmore is lovelier than her daughters."

"I have been away for a fortnight," he answered, "and can not say. I would I could say 'aye,'" he added humorously; "'twould relieve much anxiety!"

"'Tis the dreadful uncertainness of you masculine lovers," Anne countered archly, "that keeps us poor maids in terror."

"'Tis said," put in Paulina, "that his Excellency will publish a new code for the palace etiquette. Think of it! Just like a real court! There is to be a chamberlain, and all gentlemen are to unbonnet before the portraits of the king and queen!"

The young man looked dark. "Would he kept to his court etiquette!" he exclaimed. "See you the green yonder?"

All turned their gaze toward the lower end of the street where sat the new two-storied Capitol with its tall cupola and clock. Generally there

were to be seen burgesses, singly or in couples, passing in or out. Now the space before it was covered with knots of men, talking, gesticulating, walking from group to group. One could almost imagine an accompanying hum, like the sound of a distant bee swarm. As they gazed, the knots separated and moved slowly toward one of the side doors.

"They enter the left," said Anne. "'Tis not the usual sitting of the House, then. Has the governor summoned them to the Council chamber? And for what?"

"For what?" repeated Jefferson wrathfully. "For the Resolves printed to-day in the Gazette appointing a day of prayer and fasting because of the shutting of the port of Boston. His Excellency —I had like to have said 'his Majesty'—is in a fine rage. The Virginians are in no mood to bear more flouting. One can scarce say what will befall if he dissolve them!"

There was well-nigh a wail at this. "Oh!" moaned Mistress Byrd. "Then there will be no ball!"

Jefferson smiled, but a spot of tempestuous red burned Anne's cheek as she flung up her head. "If the governor clapped all save ten of Virginia's burgesses into the prison yonder," she said slowly, "the

ten would give his lady the ball of welcome. They are Virginians."

"See!" said Jefferson. "He is coming."

At the end of the broad reach which spitted Duke of Gloucester Street midway, nearly opposite them, stood the palace, brick-red, greened with creepers, lifting its tall lantern above gardens laid in the Italian fashion in shapes of stars and horse-shoes. Now its front sprang suddenly into action. A great chariot, very splendid, with vice-regal trappings of gilt and leather, whirled up at the steps, and two figures entered it. The vermilion-liveried outriders broke into gallop; and the team of six milk-white horses wound through the many-acred grounds sown with silver-grass and studded with mulberry and catalpa trunks like gnarled, one-legged dancers, and swept at a smart trot into Duke of Gloucester Street.

His Excellency, Lord Dunmore, red and thick-necked, with Captain Foy, his cold-featured aide, beside him, rode to the Capitol.

The splendid chariot, brought from London to awe the Virginians, went at speed along a way suddenly grown a-bustle. The unwonted summons to the Council chamber had gone abroad, and Williamsburg, full to the brim with rich planters from the valleys of the Potomac, the Rappahannock and

the James, now at their town houses with their families for court season, were come forth to wait and to speculate upon the royal governor's wrath. The road was filling with coaches-and-fours bearing the nabobs and their dames, and with sparkish young gentlemen passing on dancing nags. The pave of old Bruton Church, wherein of a Sunday sat his Excellency in his pew under the canopy, was bright with maids in satin and lace, with beaux showing silken calves and powdered wigs, and with students in collegiate gabardines of a sobriety by no means ever fitting their habits.

Stout old Governor Botetourt had got many a cheer in the old days as he rode by in his fine chariot. He was popular, and departed this life in the odor of liking, to receive a statue on William and Mary common. But for the new governor, John Murray, Earl of Dunmore, there had come to be many a wry look. He had learned Toryism under Lord Bute, as had the king, and nature had made him a Scotch barbarian to begin with. Diplomacy to him meant the heavy hand, and charity was as far off as religion.

He rode along this afternoon scowling, abrupt and imperious as usual, and now with an extra set to his heavy lantern-jaw that boded no good.

Beaming adoration was in the low curtsy that

Mistress Byrd swept him as he was whirled past with unseeing eyes, and at the sight Anne's mouth took on little lines of impatience.

"I shall drive to the green," she said, springing into the seat. "The Capitol, Rashleigh," she cried to the coachman, and waved good by to the group.

"Anne grows a worse Whig every day!" pouted Mistress Byrd in a pet. "La, I think the governor is monstrous fine. I am going to wear my celestial blue satin to-morrow night and a white satin petticoat!"

Many a gallant bowed low from the pave as the beauty of Williamsburg went by.

"'Slife!" protested young Brooke to Francis Byrd as he petted his lace 'neath the leaden bust of Sir Walter at the Raleigh's entrance. "She would dazzle St. James. Even the Du Barry was a stick to her! By the Lord, they should send her to London!" He prided himself upon his foreign travel.

Byrd flushed angrily. It was not to his pleasure to hear her name coupled with such. Nor did it sit well upon the tongue of this dissipated fop. He choked the word that rose to his lips, however, and turned away, looking longingly after the girl that rode by.

The chariot bearing Anne wheeled near the

debtors' prison, abreast of the new Capitol whose wide wings spread out like a great letter H. Scarcely had it pulled up when the west door opened harshly and poured forth again the lowering burgesses.

They came out under the sparse trees, through which gleamed the sky steely-blue as sword-blades —quietly and in orderly groups, but with brows knit, fingers clenched and smoldering anger in their faces.

In the groups one might have seen many conditions. There was a sprinkling of homespun and buckskin, men from the shadow of the Blue Ridge, and from the great district of West Augusta stretching far to the Mississippi; and with these, rich planters from the tidewater and bay counties and the big rivers, clad in foreign fabrics, with ample wigs, swords and cocked hats, or the conical head-covering then coming to vogue in England. But save a few on whose faces sat a smirk of Tory smugness, all wore the same deadly look of anger and concern.

Anne leaned forward and watched the crowd with tiny cores of fire in her eyes. Broken bits of conversation were wafted to her.

"I had looked to see better things of Dunmore, but 'tis all of a piece. We, burgesses of Virginia!

Wagged at, like so many school children, i' faith, and sent home with a flea in the ear! 'Tis unbearable."

"'Better things of Dunmore!' A plague on him! Cry 'God save the King' and give the devil the Colony!"

Such sullen growlings betokening storm, and then smug ones, passing with snuff-taking and derisive shrugs of shoulders:

"Henry is mad. You heard what he said at Colonel Samuel Overton's the other day. 'Independence!' 'Our Declaration!' 'Aid from Louis the Sixteenth!' He is mad as a March hare! Treason forsooth? 'Tis matter for a leech! As if we had discipline, ships of war, or money. I tell you, he will embroil us all with such clatter. The governor would be perfectly justified in . . ." So they passed on.

A smile, quizzical, disapproving, but wondrous kind, wreathed the corners of the watcher's mouth as a tall, splendid old man, with aquiline nose and sharp, gray eyes, came down the street, leaning on the arm of a negro body-servant. Three-score years and ten he had passed—one saw that by the lines in his face—and his frame was big and wide. He was gaunt, rawboned and sour-faced, and plainly though richly dressed, wearing a large jewel-

The girl's eyes rested smilingly on the cocked-hat, the grizzled wig, the antique coat, with its square-cut lapels and shoulders rounded after a fashion of twenty years before, and then softly and lovingly on the rugged, masterful face, every whit patrician.

All her life she had loved this man—the old baron of Greenway Court. He had carried her at her christening. As she saw him now, coming slowly but erect, bowing to salutations by the way, she thought again on what he must have looked in his youth, before the French war, when he had strayed from a London world of fashion, with a heart sore by reason of a jilting, they said, to bury himself in the shadows of the Blue Ridge. He had dreamed of building himself a great manor-house with ten thousand acres, calling it Greenway Court, and there living solitary. But a rough hunting-lodge on a spur of the mountain near Winchester was all that ever came of it.

The girl watched him as he approached, stopping now and again for a word. Each pause made him look more hot and angry, and seeing, she shook her head as if she chid some naughty child.

As he neared her, speaking with one of the more richly dressed burgesses, his bottled wrath burst

out in a flood. He raised his thorn stick and shook it at the building, choking with rage.

"Meet at the Raleigh, gadzooks!" he shouted. "Whose pelting is this? Patrick Henry's, aigh? I thought as much! A deer-stalker!" he cried, tattooing with his cane. "A good-for-naught bartender! Why, he used to bring me my ale when I passed Hanover Court House. A coarse, dancing, fiddling, wench-chucking vagabone, I tell you! His father, the justice, is a good, sober country gentleman, but little the son takes after him. Come-day-go-day-God-send-Sunday! He must marry the tavern-keeper's daughter!"

"My Lord!" Anne's voice rose sweet and clear.

"And now because he mouths treason as bold as brass, and because he wins a dirty damage case against some tuppenny parsons, he sits in the Burgesses and rides with gentlemen!"

"Lord Fairfax!" She was standing upright in the coach.

"Virginia is in a pretty case, to take up any leather-breeched Tom, Dick or Harry, wagging his jaw . . . "

"Lord Fairfax!"

"About the king's business!"

"I wait for you to ride with me."

The old man half-turned, choked, shook his cane

again in the air; then, seeing the girl, made her as slow and courtly a bow as if he were in an Assembly. Then he climbed into the chariot and sat down.

"Go and wait at the tavern, Joe," Anne said to his servant.

The baron took Anne's slender, cool hand in his huge, bony, trembling one, and they rode silently.

As he had stormed—this big, irascible, loyal-hearted subject of a bad king—she had seemed to see in contrast Henry's sharp, sallow, good-humored, sun-burned face, those gray-black, cavernous eyes with the fire behind them. And at that moment a touch of prophecy came to her. This old man represented the masterfulness of birth, the pride of power, the dogged faith that is splendid but will not reason. In Henry was the new spirit of the new land, eager, thoughtful, patient, indomitable—waiting, but open-eyed. And if she had no answer for this stanch old man, it was not because she knew none.

After a while the fury had burned itself out in that worn frame. "'Tis naught I care for the rest of them, my dear," he said, "but my boy Washington is in with their damned treasons, and the Whigs will ruin him!"

CHAPTER II

A FOREST DEMOSTHENES

On the south bank of the Pamunkey River near Studley one summer afternoon, two men sprawled in the slashes by a leaf-mottled pool sucked in from the river. Fresh-cut fishing poles lay at their feet, and in a near basket, on a bed of green leaves, glinted and flopped a dozen lean carp and spotted trout.

One of the fishermen, Francis Byrd, lay with his youthful face upturned, watching the woolly clouds like sheep dusty and driven, huddling in the blue. His companion was older. He was clad in a coarse cloth coat stained with the chase, greasy buckskin breeches and leggings for boots. He had a lean sallow face with high cheek bones, set off by a white linen cap, under the edges of which stuck a fringe of sand-colored hair, and he was sunk in that profound contemplation affected by a green lizard in the sun.

Finally the sallow-faced man gave a mighty yawn

and sat up with dead leaf-wisps clinging to his coat.

"On such a day as this," he vowed, "'twere a sin against the Almighty not to go a-fishing!"

The other sent a twig skirling into the drooped tangles of grape-vine, where wood-birds fluttered with quick, noisy strokes. He had this day been relearning old woodlore: how in bush-angling the sun must strike the face lest the shadow fright the fish; how the carp would rise best to a swan's-head; how the trout was keenest under the smother of a smart, foamy fall. For in these things, as in others clacked less loudly at the Raleigh Tavern in Williamsburg, his companion of this day was deeply versed.

Virginians, old and young, were for the most part loyal in liking to the new soil—this, although they turned fond eyes to the old family manors. The planters still sent their sons to Eton and Oxford to be educated, and spoke of England as "home"; but these sons, meanwhile, fruit of the new soil, followed the yelping, blooded packs of England boasting valiantly of their own bow-legged dew-lapped mongrel of beagle and fox-hound. They threshed sunny, fenced coverts longing for a thigh-deep Potomac marsh with a bleak wind whipping the sedge. They rode of a smart day on Rotten

Row, wishing it were Bruton pave in Williamsburg. And they wrote Greek verses with dainty colonial gloves tucked beneath their brocaded waistcoats, dreaming of York-town wharf again.

Byrd was no exception to the rule. Now, lying in the sunlight, he sighed from sheer delight.

"Mr. Henry," he cried, pulling a long breath, "I never was so glad of anything in all my life as to be home again!"

Henry smiled. "Are you longing for an Indian fight?"

The young man's face clouded suddenly. "I don't mean the commission," he said. "'Twas mother's doing; she asked it of the governor. I wish she hadn't. I intend to resign it after this one campaign," he went on. "Then I thought I would study law. I don't want to be a ne'er-do-well."

His companion pulled his chin.

"The law is a long wrestle," he said, chewing a grass-blade. "An I were you, I would keep the commission. 'Tis easy enough to resign it. If Virginia needs you, she will be glad of such a training. You are young yet. I didn't study law till I was twenty-four. A ne'er-do-well! Why, lad, I had that name flung at me for ten years, and there are a plenty who will have it so still. Sooner or later

we find ourselves, and then 'tis plain sailing. What think you of me for a farmer?"

The look on the other's face made him laugh again mellowly.

"Oh, and I was one," he declared. "I raised my oats and drove in the cows with the rest of them. 'Tis curious how we are made in this world. Square pegs and round holes everywhere when a plenty of us, by the body of God! might be king's ministers. Here am I, for instance. Think you I was cut out for the law-courts? You should ask my father-in-law at the tavern."

"Tell me?" Byrd's face held an eager, smiling interest.

"When I was fifteen," went on Henry, "I had no more bent to the statutes than a cat for lace-making. Only give me a gun, and I was as happy as a pig in muck. My father leaned toward trade for me—mayhap because he himself was a scholar. For he liked naught better than to argue the doctrine of eternal punishment with Colonel Bland on the Greek text, and he could draw a map better than a weir."

"I have seen his plate of Virginia," the other broke in. "'Tis in the library at Westover. Lord Fairfax said once 'twas the best in the Colonies."

"I'll warrant he said no good of me though!" smiled Henry. "Well, my father—for there were nine of us, no modest number i' faith—set my brother William and me up in stock. William took to it like a duck to dough, but the ledgers might go hang for all of me. I could no more collect an account than beg for a parish. I went hunting while the fat burned, and made friends and debts faster than a living. You may believe a twelve-month put an end to that.

"Then 'twas farming for a season or two, a forced sale and a store again. I was two years at this, and at the end my cash sales footed up a matter of thirty-nine pounds and six shillings—about enough to buy a gig. And here I was, twenty-three years old, penniless and with a big family, and good for naught in the world but to fling a fish-cord or scrape a fiddle-bow."

"And they called you 'ne'er-do-well'!" said Byrd, under his breath.

"There was luck in it," Henry continued. "Fate said I shouldn't farm. Fate said I shouldn't trade. Here is where a friend comes in. Captain Dandridge, who married Governor Spottswood's daughter, was a true friend of mine if ever man had one.

"'Up anchor and clear the shoals, Patrick,' says

he to me, 'and steer for the general court,' and straightway packed me off with a 'Coke upon Littleton' and a 'Digest of the Virginia Acts.'

"I thought it over a while. As for study, I'd as lief slept with a wet dog! But marry, there was naught else in sight, so I pulled a long face and laid my nose for the law-books.

"They were as dry as the prophet's bones, God knows, and I snored over them for a full six weeks. Then, thinking I knew all the law in the Colonies, I rode to Williamsburg for a license."

Byrd laughed outright. "Six weeks!" he cried.

Henry relaxed in a pickle-dry smile. "'Twere as well as six years to me," he said. "The Lord made me no damned scholar. I wager the examiners knew not what to make of me, for I probably had less law in my crop than any one they had ever seen. There was Mr. Robert Nicholas and Mr. Wythe, and the two Randolphs, John and Peyton. I knew no one of them from Adam.

"'Faith,' says Mr. Wythe, the first I went to, 'I like your assurance, but sign I will not. Not though you ask me till doomsday!' Mr. Nicholas was as bad.

"Then it was Mr. John Randolph. He sniffed elegantly at my country clothes, and bombarded me

with the common law. Before long he had me in an argument overstrong for a hot day. My pleas were not in any of the books either.

"At last he stopped me and dragged me off to his office. 'Young man,' says he, pointing to an army of calf-bindings, 'look there!'

"'I see,' says I. I thought it was all up with me. 'The devil only knows what's in them!'

"'What you do *not* know, is in these books, young man,' says he. I had my hat on by this time.

"'But what you *do* know,' he added, pulling me back, 'is in your natural reason. By this, I bespeak your genius. Let your industry ornament it.' And thereupon, without more ado, he signed his name.

"I was glad, for I knew a sight of it would be enough for Mr. Peyton. Then back I posted to Mr. Nicholas's.

"'What! Back again?' says he. 'You know too little law, sir.'

"'I've swallowed a whole library since I saw you,' said I.

"He hemmed and took snuff, but I stuck to him like a leech, and at last, after he had made me promise to study like a book-worm, he signed to be well rid of me.

"And that," Henry ended, "is how I became a

lawyer. 'Tis a tale," he added lugubriously, "that never fails to make me dry. Saints' breeches! The sun is getting low. We would best start back to Hanover Court House if we would have Mr. Shelton give us these fish for supper."

He wound up the poles and laid them in the crotch of a tree, remarking that they would be handy for the next comer, then threw himself down with head over the bank and sucked up a draft through his teeth.

"Best drink in all the world, Frank," he averred, looking up with chin dripping. "None of your neguses or your whip-sillibubs for me! Though I've no objections to Mr. Shelton's madeira or honest ale. But the precious cordials your fine gentleman brings from the Indies to smack lips over at a guinea a bottle, may stay corked till doomsday for all my tasting!"

Wiping his mouth on his sleeve, he picked up the basket and led the way with a long stride to a near bridle-path, overgrown now and showing old log-butts where a way had been axed for a chariot through wind-fallen timber. Along this they plodded a quarter-mile to where on a cross-roads sat, squat and sober, a tavern with a well beside it. At a halloo the host came out.

"What luck, Patrick?" he called. "Come in, come in! I hope," to Byrd, "that you enjoyed the day, sir."

"Mr. Shelton," said Henry, "your unworthy son-in-law has hooked seven trout. I take oath that I am hungry enough at this minute to eat their heads and tails."

When Byrd, fresh from a sousing of spring-water, came into the clean-sanded, stucco-paneled room, he perceived his friend of the buckskins slouched far down in a chair by the window. His shamble legs were thrust forward and his chin was on his chest. A dog-eared book was on his knee.

In the midst of a chuckle he turned his head.

"Good!" he said, "I swear I think supper is due by now."

He came ambling over, sending the book tumbling; then, recovering it, he held it up with a laugh. "The 'Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy,' an old friend I keep to console me when I quarrel with the black-letter. Sit down, Frank."

The early supper came smoking—a platter of trout wrapped in green leaves, with another of canvas-back and hominy, tankards of brown ale and a drawing of old madeira from the wood.

Henry's talk, as the meal went on, was flavored with his vivid and vagabond personality—a pike he

had hooked with Mr. John Campbell, or a buck he had started along the Chickahominy. Or it would be some anecdote of the neighborhood, at which times he would drop into the broad, provincial tongue, rustic and sonorous, like a back-woodsman. Each of these stories had a shrewd moral, a homely turn, a quaint conceit, a raveled metaphor—with a laugh or a sting curled up in the tail of it.

Mrs. Shelton came and stood by admiringly, her round hand resting on the arm of the chair.

"Patrick's trade," she said. "Sooth, he could talk the hind leg off a bullock. But you should hear him musicking! I've been at him to take lessons on the fiddle. There's an actor named Alberti in Williamsburg who gives Tom Jefferson lessons at Monticello. But Patrick—he has no idea of his talent! Lord, how he used to saw at the frolics! . . . He learned to play the flute too, when he was only twelve years old. Think of that, now! 'Twas whilst he was knitting a snapped collar-bone."

After the cloth was removed, Mr. Shelton passed long clay pipes; and they drew chairs to the porch where the trill of tree-frogs sounded near and the big-winged beetles and cockchafers went thudding through the trellised trumpet-vines.

"You must have seen a monstrous lot in England,

Frank," said Henry, presently, as conversation dallied. "Did you see Charles Fox?"

"By Gad, yes," cried Byrd. "I meant to tell you. It was at Brooks's club, where I went with Mr. Cary. What think you was the first word Mr. Fox said to me when he heard I was from Virginia?"

Henry shook his head.

"On my life, 'twas of you! To think I had near forgot it. 'There's one sharp drake over there, Mr. Byrd,' says he, 'that I'd give more than a crown to know. 'Tis the same, by the mark, that plead against the parsons!'"

"The-devil-and-Tom-Walker! I shall never escape it," Henry sighed lugubriously, tapping the ashes from his pipe. "'Tis always 'the parsons,' 'the parsons,' as if I was a gospel-hater. One would think I had murdered the curate!"

"'Twas his first big case," said Mr. Shelton. "I warrant it showed some of the old fogies that a young Cato had pecked shell here amongst them. His own father was on the bench, Mr. Byrd. Tell the story, Patrick; 'tis a good one, and grows better with age like my madeira."

So Henry began:

"There are parsons and parsons," he said, in cross-legged ease, "and some of them are friends of mine. There was good old Robert Rose, of Richmond, for

instance. He gave them heaven one Sunday and hell the next. A dear old man!"

"Aye," assented Mr. Shelton. "He married me."

"And there was Parson Davies who became president of the College at Prince-town. He used to walk like the ambassador of some great king! He gave me my training, by the way. 'Slife! But for the old Calvinist, there had been no parsons' cause to tell about.

"I was a youngster when he preached at the Fork Church and my mother,—she was a good Presbyterian—used to carry me to service every Sunday. I hated it like toad-pie. And coming home to Mount Brilliant in the big double gig, it was 'Now, Patrick, what was the text?' and 'What was the argument, Patrick?' till i' faith, I grew so used to preach in his wake that I could go from firstly to amen and never lose the scent. And he could preach on anything from the birth of Christ to the death of the devil! 'Twas good practice, if it made no minister of me.

"But 'tis small love I have for the parsons as a general run," he went on, tilting his pipe between a thumb and finger—"though my uncle is one sure enough; a fox-hunting, sermon-borrowing lot, too many of them, fond of the tavern-porch and a bowl of toddy and mightily concerned in matters touch-

ing the pocket. Famine or plenty, they want their ease, and they would go to a point beyond the fiend to get it. They get good glebe and give the people worn gospel. Steal a pig and give the good man the trotters!

"Tobacco, as you know," he said, turning to Byrd, "was our money here—thanks to the king—and the king it was who fixed the parsons' salaries. Sixteen thousand pounds of good leaf, said the law, the precious parson was to get. Fair enough, when the law also fixes the price of the tobacco. Aye, it was just there was the rub!

"A field of tobacco is more pother than a queen's bank of orchids under glass. There is the seed-bed and the fly, the curing, firing, bulking, sweating, and the planter must know it as he knows his letters. There are sky-signs and the worm, harder to show than the weevil in wheat; it must not blossom, nor blow over, nor be hilled too high, nor be cut too late or too soon. Seventeen months from seed to sampling. And misfortune anywhere means loss; particularly here in Virginia, where the purity of the leaf is as fiercely defended as the chastity of a woman.

"Well, big freshets came one year, and the crops failed. Tobacco went up beyond the legal price. What's to do now? Why, pay the parsons in money,

to be sure. So said the Burgesses. Every one else would suffer; the parson would get full wages. But no! He is after his margins, and whines for his weed. 'Murder!' he yells, and sends a petition to England."

"'Twas John Camm they sent," nodded Mr. Shelton.

"Aye, president of William and Mary now. He oiled his tongue all the way over.

"'Go home easy,' says George—this sweet king of ours—'if the Burgesses made any such law, it's *nil*. I make the laws for Virginia!' Back comes John Camm then, and takes it to court, and the court agreed with the king.

"The parish collectors who hadn't given the parsons their tobacco, began to shake for their bonds. And while they were bemoaning, to the jury rode the parsons for their damages. 'Twas a hopeless case, and my big-wigs knew so much law that they backed and filled at sight of it. So finally the collectors came to me and I took the case.

"The ministers rode to court poking each other's ribs. My own father was on the bench, as Mr. Shelton said. Lord, Lord, but I was in a blue sweat that day."

Henry chuckled long as he refilled his pipe-bowl.

"My uncle Patrick, rector of St. Paul's parish,

drove up in his chariot. 'Uncle,' said I, 'I'm sorry to see you.'

"'Why?' asked the old man.

"'Because,' said I, 'if I clap eye on you when I make my speech, I shall have no heart to say aught against the clergy!'

"'Rather than that, Patrick,' said he, 'I'll not only stay outside, but egad, I'll go home again!' and off he went.

"To clip a long story, the jury gave my parsons a penny damages. They do say, when the old gentleman heard I had won, he was like to swoon away. That was six years ago," he ended, "and they won't let me outgrow it. Heigh ho! 'Tis ten by the clock. We must be off at sun-up for Wednesday's hunt at Gladden Hall. Let us pack ourselves to bed."

The morning of the meet saw Gladden Hall, the Tillotson seat, twanging with preparations for the run. Byrd and Henry had arrived late the evening before, to find the house full and robes laid downstairs for the accommodation of late guests.

Waiting breakfast, Anne stood in one of the candle-lighted rooms, listening to the shouts of the stable boys, wondering what late arrivals she should

find below stairs, and absently listening to Betsy Byrd descanting upon the horses as she looked out through the green blinds.

"Do hush chattering, Elizabeth," snapped her mother.

Mrs. Byrd was not in the best of humors, owing possibly to a spark that had flown the evening before at supper. Her political horizon was limited and she had characteristically said the wrong thing.

Conversation turning upon Doctor Franklin's electrical studies, there was a laugh at the Boston parsons who were preaching against the doctor's lightning-rods on the ground that they opposed the exercise of Divine Providence. It was at this point that Mrs. Byrd reached distinction:

"Think you, Colonel," she asked the host, "that we Virginians will ever be able to teach loyalty to the Boston puritans?"

This was worse than thin ice, for the beating of Mr. Otis by the king's brawling customs officer had never been forgiven by Virginians, monarchists as they were thought to be. Every one there knew well enough what Colonel Tillotson thought of it.

The good lady at the table's-end glanced apprehensively at him, but he smiled with perfect self-possession over his glass

"Madam," he said dryly, "we Virginians are busy teaching ourselves self-control. We can leave the Bostonians to Mr. Adams!"

Mrs. Byrd bit her lip and doubled back to fox-hunting, but the incident had not gone to better her temper for this morning.

"Come away from that blind, Elizabeth," said Mrs. Byrd. "Would you have the gentlemen see you looking like that? Anne, I have some news for you. Captain Jarrat is on his way back from England."

Anne's eyes darkened. "Is he?"

Mrs. Byrd was not annoyed at this.

"I don't see why you should turn up your nose," she bridled. "He holds a commission in the king's service, and he certainly stands high in Lord Dunmore's estimation. Most girls would be glad to get anything so genteel."

"He holds a commission, yes," Anne retorted. "What kind of commission is it that has kept him gaming and riding at Williamsburg a year at a time? I never heard of his doing anything in the king's service before this trip abroad. I despise him," she went on. "I always did. Betsy can have him."

"Elizabeth might do worse," said that young lady's

mother. And she meant it. "Anne," she asked, "who is to ride?"

Anne enumerated.

"You forgot the most important, Anne," Betsy said mischievously, making a little face behind her mother's back. "I wonder if Mr. Henry will have on his buckskins."

"I hope so. They are vastly becoming." Anne's serenity was studied. "You must let me crape your hair, dear; it is all tousled."

Mrs. Byrd had turned her head with a gasp. "Gracious heaven!" she ejaculated. "You haven't invited *him*, Anne!"

Betsy laughed.

"Why not?" asked Anne innocently. "He is a friend of Colonel Washington's and *he* was to be here. Besides, Frank likes him." This was a blow in return.

Mrs. Byrd was speechless for a moment. "I suppose I might have expected it," she said then, majestically. "Times are getting beyond me. I don't see what girls of your age want of ideas. In my day they were never expected to have them. Breeding seems to count for naught nowadays, not to speak of loyalty. That slouch!" she went on, holding up her hands. "I thought he was a demagogue

before he called that meeting in the Raleigh Tavern and sent out his silly call for a Continental Congress. Continental Congress! Continental fiddlesticks!"

"Colonel Washington was at the meeting."

"I don't care if he was!" responded the lady in great heat. "I can stomach your gentlemen rebels. Colonel Washington is a gentleman—though I have my doubts about his being such a tough Whig; 'tis not in the breed. But your half-baked, bumpkin patriot is too much! 'Tis a fine thing for loyal ladies in the king's own Colony of Virginia to have to smuggle their tea from Holland and sip it in their closets! Before the year is out Anne, I make no doubt you will be singing the fol-de-lol of that nincompoop Philip Freneau at the college, or calling yourself a 'Daughter of Patriots' and drinking some vile herb imitation that you dub 'liberty tea.' Faugh!"

"Anne," called Mrs. Tillotson at the door, "what is the matter?"

"Nothing, aunt Mildred," said Anne.

"She has asked Patrick Henry to the hunt to-day," said Mrs. Byrd.

Mrs. Tillotson's kindly eyes half smiled as she shook her head. "The colonel asked him," she corrected.

Mrs. Byrd's mouth was rounded to an inaudible "oh" and she sat down helplessly.

"'Tis time to breakfast now, girls," said Mrs. Tillotson. "Haste and don't be late."

"Mother's afraid of your uncle John," said Betsy as they went down the hall. "So he likes Master Henry, too! Anne," she sighed a little wistfully, "I wish I believed things and could fight for people the way you do. Now if you were in love with him, 'twould be different. I could understand you then. But 'tis just what he believes and that you believe the same thing! 'Tis a matter of principle. I know Master Henry is against the king. But I can't see why he is any less a common tavern bartender. You like him, your uncle likes him, brother Frank likes him. You all think he is a great man. 'Tis all terrifical puzzling to me."

CHAPTER III

HORSE AND AWAY

Is there a sight in the world to compare with the start on a hunting morning? When the colors are flying, the hounds yelping, horses pawing to be off —the very cudgeled turf springy with life and motion. This is a sight to put fire into the veins of an old man!

It was a sweet, clean morning, for rain had washed it over-night and drops hung on the gossamered porch-vines. There was a warm fillip in the air, and over all, pale clouds, a watery moon, a reddening east.

The drive was studded with riders and a-push with stirrup-boys. More than one guest was there whom such sport was training for riding on sterner fields—Will Cabell, afterward lieutenant-colonel under Washington, young George Mason of Gunston Hall, he who became a captain in the Virginian line, swarthy and athletic like his father, and Mr. John Payne of Goochland, whose daughter Dorothy

later married Mr. James Madison. The last was even then dressed soberly, having already imbibed the Quaker ideas which, when he had unbuckled his sword of the Continental army, led him to free his blacks and move to Philadelphia.

Colonel Tillotson in hunting toggery of gray homespun of a fine and elegant weave, with beribboned queue and high boots with tassels, stood tall and straight on the gravel, in a leaping, wrangling welter of hounds.

"Down, Pilgrim! Down, Trumpet!" he sputtered, wading. "Zounds, I am no fox!"

Mrs. Byrd was resplendent in dove-color. She dangled a black riding-mask with a metal mouthpiece, and tapped her pommel impatiently with a silver-tipped switch-whip, having less eye, it must be confessed, for Colonel Byrd, whose gouty foot was bandaged to the knee, than for some others. Colonel Washington, forty, grave and settled of countenance, was on his favorite Ajax, wearing a riding-frock of drab broad-cloth with gilt buttons, and walked up and down beside Colonel Overton's roan.

"Colonel Washington may be a good fighter," Betsy confided to her mother, "but he isn't near so handsome as father. I don't wonder Elizabeth Faunt Le Roy wouldn't have him."

Among these Anne rode out, glowing in a scarlet habit and wound in the ribbon of a silver hunting-horn. Her mount, Mohammed, was lead-white, monstrous deep of chest, nostrils of silk flame, with forehead full and windpipe flaring trumpet-like at the throttle; yet with the fine flat-bone and clean line of limb set in the hoofs of a racer.

John-the-Baptist had held her stirrup, grinning widely with great pride.

"Jes tech him wid de spur, Mis' Anne," he had said, "en he gwine ter go lak er flyin' squr'll." Now, under curb, the powerful beast fretted and wantoned with his bit as if the hunting thrill had flicked his blood afire.

"Anne," said Betsy sepulchrally, as she joined her. "It has happened. He has on his buckskins. There he comes now."

Henry came slowly from the stables. The horse he bestrode was as unlike any of the others as he himself was unlike the riders. It had his own sallow hue that was enhanced by his clothes, something of his wiriness and angularity. It looked over-small for the rider's weight, was lean and long and ragged, with tan muzzle and flanks, and soft, dark, watchful eyes. Some of the gentlemen regarded him curiously, but Henry knew a horse

as he knew a gun. He doffed his hunting cap to Anne, then stopped to shake hands with Colonel Overton.

Mrs. Byrd pursed her mouth as she saw him stop.

"What a homely brute he is on!" she exclaimed, "and he rides like a groom. Anne, are we waiting for any Indians to join us before we start?"

The house servants clustered in the background, waving windmill arms, to watch the going, Mammy Evaline, the oracle, in the center.

"Jes' look at Cun'l Wash'n'ton," she said. "He so tall, an' straight, an' den he set er hoss an' ride wid sich a air!"

"Mars' Henry he gwinter beat 'em all, dough," vouchsafed John-the-Baptist. "Dat whut Mis' Anne say."

His mother turned on him scornfully. "Umph! Yo' talk fool talk, nigger! Dat limpty-go-fetchum no biz'ness dar 'tall! Our folks wuz bawn qual'ty, an' dey ain' nuvver got ober it. I nuvver 'lowed Marsa'd coun'nance sich mixturation!

"Jes' look at Mis' Anne now!" she continued rapturously. "She lak er queen on er throme! Don' seem no time 'tall sence she useter squeeze meh bref plumb erway ter git erloose ter play angel

befo' de look'n-glass. Ez ef Gordamighty hadn' made her one widout her 'tendin' lak! Talk erbout de stars—she 'way erbove dem!"

Just then came the blast of Colonel Tillotson's horn; and the field was off, tossing hands to the group left on the broad porch, hounds and whippers-in ahead, clattering through the wide-swung western gate, perched thick with little negroes from the quarter like brown toads after a rain, and so to the high road and the open fields.

There was a mild wind, and the hills slept in their soft, blue Virginia haze. Across the rose-gray warp of dawn went frayed scarfs of cloud, and through it the winding horns wreathed a thread of gold.

The first mile drew Henry and Anne together.

"How splendid—this is!" she gasped. "I—want you to—beat the field."

"Why?"

She looked to the left, where rode Mrs. Byrd, and he saw the glance. His good-humored face wrinkled in a leathery smile. "Nabob isn't pretty," he said, "but by the feather-legged Moses! he can distance any horse here to-day save yours."

"Well, then . . " she answered, and shook out her reins.

The hunt took a southeasterly direction, and the dogs ahead, bungling at the knolls, were running in leaping circles through the field. A whimpering challenge came sharply from the left—only a puppy out for a first run. Then a bell-note blotted it out and the rest followed it with a shrilling jangle. The scent was found.

The field came upon it in a wide, straggling crescent, with the pack full cry in the center, Sweetlips the leader, Anne's favorite hound, running low down, spending mouth. The flung-up chorus was echoed as if another chase were in the sky. Henry hugged the left, and Anne, sitting light and swaying, sped out beside him. The pounding music lifted in her blood till she could have shouted. Three—Anne, Henry and young Byrd—were ahead now, and the sharp air reeled back past them, heavy-freighted with wild dog-music. Her stone-gray hunter was doing his best. Henry noted his flat, clean legs, the markings on his hoofs and his rider's cheek, exultant in the pace.

As they rode, the rose-stained east turned kingfisher color and then amber, and the sun splashed the clouds with pools of burnt yellow and gold till they went in a glory. It grew, in a burst, to day, grass-sweet and sullen, sodden with the wet smell

of sycamore. For a few moments Anne was drunk with the motion—the rush through tingling, dew-wet air.

The mood passed and she drew the first deep breath of calculation. The fox had doubled. The hounds ran no more with scent breast-high. They were come to a fault and cold hunting, laid nose to find the tainted herbage and writhed in ridge and hollow, while Sweetlips whimpered for the lost trail and ran panting, with lolling tongue, dazed out of weariness by the check.

It was "Yoicks! Yoicks!" or "Push him up!" as all the hunt, each yelling to his favorite hound, came up fretful to the babble of yelps.

Then, in an instant, a hound to the left gave cry again. Anne reined sharply, and there, far away, skirting a tangle of brush, melting into ground, a brown streak, scudding.

She saw Colonel Washington, his keen, pitted face alive, raise his hand and give the view-halloo —the same shout he was to give in a later dawn, when, scenting Cornwallis's stores at Brunswick, he stood up in his stirrups to see the sharp work on the Prince-town road. Mayhap a memory of this hunting day came flushing to him then, for he cried, smiling to his officers, "An old-fashioned Virginia fox-hunt, gentlemen!"

On this run, wind told. The wary fox doubled again, and the swishing brush was all about her, but to the right Anne could see a flicker of yellow, and knew that Henry led near-by.

As they broke into the open again, his brown was plunging scarce ten feet away. The foremost hounds were wriggling over a slippery tree-trunk, fallen across Queen's Creek—a narrow, yellow stream running overfull—and they two, on the instant, rode for the clay bank. It was a fair leap, but with scant five feet width of approach. Henry had just time to pull his horse down on his haunches before the brink to give her room, and she took it, Mohammed rising like a bird, from the spur.

Then, too late for the leap, he turned to the left, gave the rowel and flew along parallel with the stream. He heard an oath behind him as a worried hunter refused the jump, and then the sopping splash as horse and man and shelving bank-edge went plunging down into the saffron whirl. At a shaly dip a hundred yards above he dashed through, and, wet to his shoulders, rode up a slope across which Anne's scarlet habit flaunted alone after the dwindled pack. He put his horse to all its worth and spurted in a-stretch with her.

Just ahead of the foremost hounds the sweated, hunted thing ran like a crafty shadow. A final

agonized speeding, a dart aside, a desperate double —then the hot breath overran it, the eager jaws closed over it.

Henry flung off his horse, snatched away the still quivering body and held it up from the yelling pack, while Anne, breathless, disheveled, blew a blast on her silver horn.

They two alone were in at the death. The quarry had "lived" a full hour before the hounds, and the run had been eight miles.

It were worthy a painter's brush to picture that night. The damask cloth stretching from corner to corner of the great dining-room, bright with old glass and candelabra—the myrtle-berry candles glinting from a floor white from scouring with dry pine-needles—the guests—the visiting gentlemen still in hunting dress—about the supper-table; Colonel Tillotson in ruffled shirt, flowered tail-coat and satin waistcoat, his chin in a white stock, his wig well powdered, the very pattern of hospitable enjoyment as he held up his slim glass of tapering amber to the toasts. Then the dancing, with darky fiddlers from the quarter, and last, when the ladies were gone to their rooms, a punch of Antigua rum for the gentlemen in a rare Japanese bowl and long-stemmed pipes of tobacco in the big parlor.

Into the after-evening came the chariot of Lord

Fairfax, bearing the old baron, with a message for Colonel Byrd concerning business of the governor's Council.

It was a strangely assorted company so far as political opinion was concerned, and it was scarce to be wondered at if, in those tense days when the current of men's feelings ran so deeply, variant minds should openly clash.

Upon such a turbulent scene Anne chanced to look down that night from the upper hall, as she passed the break of the wide stairway on her way to her own room after a chat with Betsy.

Through the slender balustrade she caught a view of the parlor where Lord Fairfax, huge and gaunt, sat wide-kneed by the table, his lighted pipe in one great hand, his arm resting where it had been thrown affectionately over the back of Colonel Washington's chair. Colonel Overton stood leaning against the wainscoting, under a portrait by Mr. Charles Willson Peale, his pipe-stem gesticulating, his voice raised beyond its wont.

Henry sat far back, by the deep-throated fireplace with its dragon dog-irons, his elbows on his knees, taking no part.

"Think you 'tis kingly work," Colonel Overton was saying, "to blast this fairest colony of all for its future? To force slaves upon us thus? So he

may draw his gains, the king would overrun our shores with a barbarous population from the Niger and I know not what black corner of the earth. Virginia is the one which suffers most. It must end soon—God save it be not by negro outbreaks such as in Hispaniola! We have petitioned, we have protested, but to what good? George sniffs over his barley water and sends us a thousand more!"

"The slaves are needed for the plantations," quoth my Lord Fairfax, glowering.

Colonel Overton was not used to mincing words.

"Needed, forsooth!" he retorted. "The king tells us that! He lies, and he knows it! They breed fast enough!"

My Lord Fairfax's hands had begun to shift about the stem of his pipe. These were new times indeed! Colonel Washington sat silent and reflective—one would scarce have thought he heard except for a look in his eyes.

"You speak of your sovereign, sir!" thundered the old baron.

"Aye," Colonel Overton returned, "and how rules that sovereign? Why, by a constitution. He rules us, but he would make the constitution a cloak to cover only England. The Colonies stay in the rain. And what does my Lord Mansfield? To-day he aids the king to send us negroes; to-morrow

he sets free a Virginian wench, brought to London by her master!"

"Granville Sharp!" exclaimed Mr. Payne. "He made the point clear enough. When that slave on English soil claimed her freedom, they laughed. But Sharp asked British justice a question: 'Shall the RIGHT prevail in England?' That was all. But 'twas as if God had spoken. The slave went free. Shall what is wrong for England be forever right for her Colonies? Are we not Englishmen, too?"

"Englishmen honor their king!" fumed Lord Fairfax.

"So long," cried Colonel Overton, "as he rules honorably. But he must not forget that he governs by compact. What was it our ancestors fought for at Marston Moor? Sir, it was representation! And that the king denies us."

"Pho!" grunted Colonel Byrd. "King and lords and commons—not one-tenth of England's population votes. The Colonies have their representation in Parliament."

"We are two months' voyage away," answered Colonel Overton. "Can Parliament understand our needs? Our politics are for prime ministers to play with. One plays to be loved by the people, and another to be hated by the king. If Burke

sheds tears for us in the Commons, 'tis most likely because he hates Chatham. What think you the Duke of Grafton—what think you my Lord North knows of us? You can see by the royal governors he sends us. We are gentlemen in Virginia! And we sit for a butcher-mauling governor who ought to be sticking skulls up over Temple Bar. The Colonies need to choose their own law-makers. They need laws advocated by American representatives, *chosen* by Americans."

He glanced, as if for approval, about the circle of faces, most of them gloomy and troubled. Henry's lean face in the shadow wore a half-smile.

"As it is," the speaker went on, "'tis a chase over a beaten track. The ministries give us the same arguments now that they gave us with the Stamp Act. 'Tis the Liberals after the king, and the Constitutionalists after the Liberals, and the Whigs after all, and the king coming again on the same scent. The end of it all, I tell you, is nullification, and after that—"

"Aye," cried Lord Fairfax fiercely. "And then?"

"After that—God help us!"

There was an instant's silence in which Anne could hear the old baron's wrath bubbling. Colonel Tillotson coughed helplessly.

"Gentlemen," came a lazy voice from the shadow, falling like a splash of oil upon a rising reef. "D'ye ever hear of that fox Colonel Ochiltree started, over in Belvidere?"

It was Henry, and he dropped his legs from the round of his chair and leaned forward, looking up with a dry humor.

No one answered. The heat was in Colonel Overton's face, and my Lord Fairfax was still a-simmer with anger.

"'Tis not a bad story," said Henry slowly. "Y' see, all of old Ochiltree's dogs were Constitutionalists, the old man himself was a Liberal, and," he added, after a pause, "the fox was a Whig."

The host's face was a study of relief. Colonel Overton's lips drew down into a smile. The old baron settled into his chair, his mouth less grim, and set his eyes on the punch-bowl.

"Ochiltree," went on Henry, "would rather hunt than hear a sermon any day, and not the only one, neither. Let him start a scent and he'd ride over Christmas day and never see it. Well, he found a fox one morning back of old Stockoe Creek and put him into a hollow tree. He allowed him half an hour and put the dogs on again, but in half a mile the brute took to another.

"The old man swore he'd be split but he'd have a

run out of that same fox. 'A pox on him!' says he, and nailed up the tree.

"Egad, he fed him for three days and set him off again, with all the hounds on the place and his overseer on the best horse in the stable. He had the gout himself, and couldn't ride that day. Then he went back to dinner.

"The fox took away around Little Hunting Hill like the devil skinning slippery-elm, and when there was no sign of a return at dark, Ochiltree sat all a-chuckle, thinking what a run he was getting out of the fox after all. So he sent out some blacks with lanterns and went to bed.

"'Slife! When he got up next morning, no noise. He was cursed uneasy by now, for the best hounds he had were in the pack, so at dinner-time he triced up his gouty leg and rode out to see where was his dog-fish of an overseer.

"As he came to the foot of the hill, Gad's word! there was a beaten track through the brush looking as if a troop of horse had gone by single file, and dog tracks, too. And while he was tweaking his nose over this, damme if a dog didn't come trailing along, and he saw it was Duchess, his best hound, but worn to a shadow. Then a string of dogs loped out, and after came the overseer, looking as if he'd fall off his horse.

"The old man sat awhile after they went by, and along came the fox on the same trail round the hill.

"He was so disgusted then that he went home and didn't come back till night.

"'Pon my soul, when he came again, there was the whole chase, rounding the hill. The *fox* was walking, the *hounds* were walking, the overseer's *horse* was walking—all of them not a rod from each other, and that's God's truth!

"When Colonel Ochiltree saw that, 'Damn my bones!' says he, 'get the chariot!' and he put fox and hounds and overseer all in it, Jerrycummumble, and brought 'em home."

CHAPTER IV

THE FREIGHT OF THE "TWO SISTERS"

Leagues and leagues away from where the summer was come golden-sandaled over Virginia, throbbing now with all the pent-up intolerance of years of repression and smothered resentment, a ship which had been strained and pummeled by two months packed with tempest, unfolded new canvas under the crumbling splendors of a clearing sky. The day drew breezily serene. The sea had tired itself out and the sun burned pleasantly in the blue.

One of the few passengers whom the softening weather had drawn into the air—a young Frenchman, fair, slight, well-knit and soberly garbed in gray—leaned upon the forward rail with shoulders squared to the sunshine and looked below him.

No mart of the Old World could have shown a more strangely assorted company than did the lower deck of the brigantine Two Sisters out of London, bound for York-town, Virginia. Swarming to the

bulwarks was a motley herd of redemptioners. A few young women of fair color, English country girls from the farmlands, looking forward to new things and a rosy marriage in this new land which beckoned to every creed and nation. More wore harder faces, toil-sharpened—men who had worked their trade soberly to yield at last to the spur of ambition and barter six years of plantation labor for a passage to opportunity. Mixed with these still others, men and women of unlovely look, tawdry and sloven, lured by the crimps from stews and night-cellars, drifting to the new life because perforce it could not hold worse than the old. Here and there was a face, too, that bore the unmistakable mark of crime. Many a convict fled here in this year of 1774, escaping the rack, the ear-cropper and the cart's tail. Indeed so greedy were the plantation factors of hands that more than one colony was made to hold open arms to the Old World's vagrants, its felons and its dregs.

The memory of posterity is charitable to the makers of new colonies.

Now the creatures who had wallowed in sullen waiting or cried shrilly to their Saints were still, or babbling of other things. From the rigging a tarred mariner bawled his polygamous lay of "Bold Jack in the Ways," and the few passengers, who had

weathered the storm grumbling or dicing below deck, were sunning themselves upon the poop.

The young Frenchman shifted his slow gaze from the redemptioners and let it run far out over the water, watching the little spots of foam that marbled the great waste. He was undeniably good-looking, of an elusive, beardless charm, with a forehead graver than his mouth. His hair was rich brown, long and curling, for he wore no wig, and his finely-cut lips were set over a chin of bold delicacy. His eyes were full and hazel, his expression one of zest and eagerness.

On this day, as he leaned against the rail, a man was watching him intently from where he stood, farther back. The man's name was Jarrat, and he wore the uniform of a captain in his Majesty's Horse.

To relate that Captain Jarrat had carried his handsome face and domineering bearing aboard the ship on the day of sailing, with a letter from Lord Stormont, British Ambassador in Paris, hidden in his breast pocket, is to go back a bit. Jarrat was close-mouthed. As far as the other passengers were concerned he was a British officer, returning to the Virginias. To a nice eye he would

have betrayed an over-intimate curiosity as to a certain passenger.

The second day out he accosted the skipper, Master Jabez Elves, and wished him fair weather and a good day, with an insinuating accent which betokened a bent for conversation. But Master Elves replied only with a nautical grunt.

Jarrat tried a direct inquiry:

"Where is the Marquis de la Trouerie?"

"Sick," replied the skipper. "In his cabin," and rolled away.

"Ah," smirked Jarrat, "our French gentleman is a poor sailor."

But as the days went by it became certain that the distinguished passenger was ill of a less passing malady than *mal-de-mer*.

On an evening the captain pushed open a narrow cabin door at the end of a passage; but before he could enter a young man sprang up and barred the way.

"I would see the Marquis de la Trouerie," said Jarrat.

"You can not see him, Monsieur." The young man's tone was very firm.

"Who are you?"

"The marquis's secretary, Monsieur."

Jarrat took a gold crown from his pocket and offered it to the other with the easy effrontery of one perfectly certain of his ground. Every underling, it was his belief, had his price, from lackeys to prime ministers. It is a theory which on the whole works not badly.

The man before him, however, was of another sort. He put the coin back. "You can not see the marquis, Monsieur," he repeated.

"Can not, you whelp . . . " said Jarrat, with his tongue on his lip, and in the soft tone which with him covered a white boil of rage. A copper lantern, pierced with holes, threw yellow beams down the passage, and in this glare the young man on the threshold saw his face, evilly beautiful and distorted. The coin rattled on the floor.

The young Frenchman stooped to pick up the gold piece. "Monsieur has dropped his crown," he said, holding it out.

Jarrat took it and thrust it into his pocket. "It was too small a *douceur*," he said, easily, "eh, Master Secretary?"

Most of those on the ship did not know, so insular were the prejudices of the Anglo-Saxon, that the Marquis de la Trouerie was a personage in his own country. Even Caron de Beaumarchais, son

of a watch-maker, that airy, naïve, fantastic charlatan who, at the age of twenty-four, had washed his hands at his father's shop, changed his clothes and gone to court to give the four daughters of Louis XV lessons on the harp—even he was less welcome at the Tuileries or less a favorite of the young Queen Marie Antoinette than this same nobleman, now aboard the Two Sisters.

It is, perhaps, not to be wondered at that the passengers knew little of such things, and doubtless, for the most part, cared less. Two Annapolis merchants (loyal, since the non-importation agreements had pinched their pockets)—a brace of London factors looking for likely agencies—a Virginian, fresh from study in the Middle Temple, bound for the wool-sack at Lancaster—a British quartermaster journeying to Boston—what should such a company know of Gallic pedigrees or the chatter of the French court?

A diplomat might have found in the presence of the marquis something to ponder. For at that time strange things were stirring. Louis XVI, young, enthusiastic, unaccustomed, was learning for the first how exceeding difficult it is to be a king. Monsieur Turgot, his grim old minister of finance, logical, pitiless, cold as a dog's nose, was pulling

one way; Beaumarchais, brilliant as a chameleon, fascinating, egotist, intimate of the French queen, was pulling another.

And what was the bone of contention? Whether France should give her treasure to the secret aid of the American Colonies. With such counsels in the air England slept, like a surly bull-dog, with one eye open. She watched at home and her astute Ambassador, Lord Stormont, kept a hawk's eye upon the Tuileries.

So, in itself, there was an interest for those who knew, attaching to the sudden journeying to America of this man, so near to the French counsels, at once a noble, a courtier and a republican. And this interest was intensified for Jarrat, who, mindful of a letter he carried of confidential import, hugged the reflection that he knew the reason for it.

Jarrat, like many another schemer, made the error of under-valuing the intellectuality of an opponent. He had small idea that the marquis's young secretary was observant in his turn. It was nevertheless the fact. But Monsieur Armand, who had scented him very early, kept his cabin, and no one aboard—the ship carried no leech—saw his master.

Four days after the episode of the gold crown, Jarrat tried the skipper again.

Master Elves chewed a bitter cud and wore a

habitual droop to his eye. Now the courtesy came as thickly as cold-weather treacle.

"The Marquis de la Trouerie," he answered, "ain't on the ship."

Jarrat stepped back heavily. "Not on the ship, fiend plague me! He *is* on the ship."

"Mayhap ye know better nor I," answered Master Elves shortly.

Jarrat burst out laughing. He felt a sudden contempt for this clumsy subterfuge.

"A brave seclusion!" he cried. "And how long is it to last? Is the noble gentleman to lie shamming Abraham in his cabin till we sight the Virginia capes? Awhile ago he was sick, guarded from all our pining eyes by his argus-eyed clerk. Now, behold, he is not even aboard. O, an accomplished nobleman!"

The skipper squinted out to sea and a drawn pucker came to his lips.

"See here," said Jarrat, his tone taking edge. "I have business with this gentleman, and I'll not be put off. This is the eighth day out and he hasn't shown his nose out of his cabin. 'Tis my opinion he's no more sick than I am."

"No more is he," said Master Elves. "What then?"

"Just this. I want to see the marquis, and I

mean to see the marquis. D'ye hear that, you lumpfin? 'Twill be better for you, I can tell you, if you fetch me to him at once!"

The skipper's moment had arrived.

"Fetch ye to him!" he roared, with something between an oath and a chuckle. "Damn my spritsails, but ye can swim to hell and back then! The man ye're after died of flux two days ago and was sent to the fishes last night! Fetch ye to him! Haw-haw!"

With this parting shot he went off spitting furiously.

"Dead!" exclaimed Jarrat, with sagging jaw, staring after him. "Dead!" he said again; and then stood, vacant-eyed, his face the dull color of chagrin in which calculation has had no time to slip.

With the passengers the young secretary, Monsieur Armand, had his way to make and this he accomplished with abundant good nature. Him they first snubbed, then tolerated, then liked.

The young Virginian, Breckinridge Cary, sought him openly and more than once drew his arm through his own as he walked the deck. The Virginian was beyond question of the quality, and certain footing had made for him social squeamishness unnecessary. As for the secretary, he went his way with imper-

turbable good humor. Even storm could not dampen his spirits.

For reasons that have been stated, the news of the demise of the marquis, whom the passengers had not known to regret, made little sensation on the Two Sisters. Next day a bark was sighted out from Norfolk, and there was a budget of New-World news and a bunch of Virginia Gazettes to furnish matter for talk. A fortnight later the incident, however full of moment it may have been to Paris, was well-nigh forgot. They had not all of them Jarrat's reasons for remembering.

But, as days wore on, and calm succeeded storm, Jarrat, who thought much, studied Monsieur Armand with a lazy interest that in time, as shall be seen, gave birth to a plan. He gave the secretary no cause to remember their first meeting at the little cabin door and schooled his tone to an insinuating friendliness. He even condescended to game with him and to question him amiably touching politics in France, and more than one of these inquiries turned cunningly, as on a pivot, upon the young man's late master.

So a month passed, pleasantly for some, irksomely for most. Jarrat watched the secretary boldly; the secretary, in his own way, watched Jarrat. And so it

stood on the serene day when Monsieur Armand leaned upon the rail and looked out across the shadowless waste where the track of the blazing sun stretched in a molten dazzle like a quivering spear of God's.

Presently he felt a light touch on his arm, and turning, saw the Virginian.

"Dreaming?" asked Cary. "Of what?"

"Of your golden land, Monsieur."

The other smiled, then sighed and leaned beside him. "A golden land, in sooth. I would it had no storms, but a sweet sun dawning ever for it. Troubled, indeed, it was when I left it—more troubled now as I return." He paused a while.

"I love the land," he said; "I know not if even France can be so lovely. Is it so? And do you love it?"

The young Frenchman's face grew earnest.

"When I was born," he replied, "France was good, Monsieur—I think it was the best land in the world, as to-day it is the most beautiful. But Louis the Fifteenth was young then. Since have come a Pompadour and a Du Barry. So it is that the good in France has been hidden underneath many other things. It is true that the ministers of the crown have sold titles of honor—places

in the courts. Justice—the thing for which your Colony now is crying to England—this has been impossible to the poor, the low. The rich buy it. Paris laughs and does not care! There the wits lampoon the dignitaries, the young bishops sneer at God and the abbés are become elegant to kiss the hands of painted countesses. But the poor, the oppressed—the people, Monsieur—what of them?"

He let his gaze wander. A dreamy light was in his eyes.

"Ah, Monsieur, they have watched. They have been waiting. They are ignorant. They were never taught. But all this time, one man—the exiled, the glorious, . . . he has been writing. He has taught that the unnoble are not field beasts, that they are men; that the noble and the peasant are all one—that the poor must not be trodden on."

"Voltaire," Cary said in a low voice.

"France," Armand went on, "has been reading this one. The smith and the plowman talk of what he has said in the rows and at the forge. It is not only the poor, the low, Monsieur. Nobles who wear coroneted swords also think these things. They, loving liberty, would give their lives for their king. There is in Paris a club . . . "

He paused abruptly. When he began again it was in a voice tinged with sadness.

"Louis the Fifteenth is dead. Louis the Sixteenth reigns."

Cary's glance flashed into his.

"Louis the Sixteenth is young and ambitious. He hates England. An there were war here, 'twould advantage him to aid the Colonies."

"Monsieur," declared the other, "it might ruin him. Listen! His own people are worse foes to the king of France than England, Monsieur. And aiding the Colonies here is putting a two-edged sword into their hands! Even now they have the wish to redeem France. But they know not how. They have never seen such a thing. Power is all around them and it seems as if it must last forever. So it is, Monsieur, that these nobles—these of better blood—who love first of all their France—I could tell names—a Mirabeau, a Lafayette—they would have their king aid America. They have joined hands with men of lower birth like Beaumarchais and made courtiers of them to the same end."

"But," reflected Cary, puzzled, "you say to help our Colonies might ruin Louis. Why, then, would these nobles push the plan? Have they such hate of England?"

"No, no; not because they hate England as Louis does, but because they love France better than Louis, and to save her they must even risk to ruin him.

There is more than one French king at stake—there is a dynasty! These are not the middle ages, Monsieur. In these days the peoples are awaking. France, if she lives, must open her eyes. These men I tell you of would jolt her wide awake. They would have her smiths and her plowmen stop their toil to listen across the seas—to hear the guns of a people who would not be oppressed—to see royal mercenaries driven into the sea just by people like them! Then their murmur would be a roar. They would say, 'So can we do also!' Then the corrupt court would stand terror-stricken. And then at last there would be an end of the selling of titles, of the elegant bishops and the painted countesses. France would put on purity again, and her king and her nobles would rule justly, and poverty would not stalk everywhere. These nobles of which I speak are loyal, Monsieur; they love first France and then their king."

"Gentlemen," rose Jarrat's voice, "the hog-pen is just below you. Will you come aft where the lookout is more agreeable and join me in a game of loo?"

On a morning when land had been long promised and was eagerly looked for, the young Frenchman, Monsieur Armand, mounted to the deck. His face

was weather-burnt and the salt breath of the spume fell damp on his hair. The Virginian came and stood beside him and both looked down upon the wretched legion of redemptioners crowding the lower deck, gazing dumbly up like cattle.

"A brave sight," submitted Cary, "to show the riches of the Colonies."

His tone was not without bitterness, as the Frenchman perceived. "You would not have it so?"

"I? No. We have no need of some of the offscouring you see there; it will breed us the curse of crime. But what care the factors? 'Tis profit to them. And what cares the king? It means more tobacco, and tobacco stuffs his coffers."

"Yet some of these may be lifted by opportunity."

"Aye," answered Cary. "Bad as they are. Wooden hogs, fair sick for the lash, lumps from Cork or lack-Latin sots shipped for school-masters. Their sons may be good citizens. New lands, new conditions. If this land be not saddled with another's ills, here these shall at least have hope. By their faces they leave not much to love behind them."

Before either spoke again a cry came up from where a knot of sloven redemptioners were gathered —a cry and a hoarse word in one. Down below, at

one side, a woman leaned, hugging a shawl-wrapped bundle to her breast.

She was a drab, but with a certain sullen beauty that is bred of Latin blood. Armand had seen her face more than once transfigured by that wondrous glory of mother-love. He had that very day heard her crooning softly as she walked, noted the strange furtiveness with which she avoided the too curious gaze of her fellows—wondered what subtle grace nature had lent for mother eyes to those infant features.

Now one of the crew stood over her, plucking at the shawl. She was weeping passionately, loudly, without pretense of concealment.

"What a devil's that?" bawled the mate's voice from a rope ladder.

"The brat's dead," said the sailor. "Blow me tight, I've been watching her for two days. The lallop's been singing to it to pull the wool over our eyes."

"Dead is it? Pitch it overboard, then." He kicked down a greasy rag of canvas.

As the man he commanded approached the woman she fell on her knees, shrinking in close against the bulwarks and speaking rapidly in some foreign tongue.

"What's that lob-lolly?" asked the mate.

"She says," translated one of the pitiful group around her, "that the land is so near. And the water is cold. She wants to bury it in the ground."

"Split me," oathed the mate, "is that all? Over with it, Jerry!"

Again she spoke, volubly and with many groveling sobs.

"She says," said the redemptioner, "that if it could only be blessed! There is no priest aboard."

The mate, with his hands on the rail, laughed at this. "Do what I say, you down there," he cried; "will ye stand making mouths all day? Tie it in that canvas."

The man he had bidden approached the woman to take the cold little body from her, but she turned suddenly a fury, and holding it to her breast with one arm, fought him off screaming.

He jumped back with his hand clapped to his arm-pit. "Hell!" he yelled. "The Jezebel's bit me!"

There was a great laugh from the sailors, and the mate cursed luridly from above. "Are ye molly-coddles, then?" he shouted. As they hesitated, he scrambled down hand over hand, damning them for land-lubbers and clearly minded to do it himself.

The Frenchman's fingers, as he stood beside the Virginian, gripped the rail. "Swine!" he said, un-

der his breath. Then he leaned over and called clearly. "Keep your hand from that woman."

The mate looked up astonished at the group, for the other passengers had gathered to witness what was going on.

"What's that?" he asked.

Armand repeated his words.

The mate's face turned a spongy purple, and he laughed in a way that was not good to hear. For answer he reached out a hand to the shawl and literally tore it away from the poor clay it covered.

At the instant he did so Armand vaulted the rail where he stood, caught a rope, swung to a stanchion, and landed as lightly as a cat at the side of the burly ruffian. The act was so clean, so graceful and so quick that none of the passengers could have told exactly how it was done.

The mate turned, and seeing him at his elbow, struck with all his strength at the other's head.

The stroke was one to stun, but it never reached home. The young foreigner bent one side, not moving his feet, with a motion that would have spoken volumes to an athlete, and the mate's fist banged against the bulwark. While he staggered from this, Armand, seizing a rope's end as he circled, cut him across the face with such a slash that the blood ran from the gash.

Now ensued a strange combat. The mate, heavy and cumbrous, tried to reach the other with sledge-hammer blows. The Frenchman, slight, wary, circling, retreating, slipped hither and thither. Three times in as many seconds that sibilant "swish" sang, and a red mark sprang out on the brutal face.

At each swing of the fist a sort of groan went up from the huddled redemptioners, and at each cut they sucked in their breath with delight. It was a new, strange entertainment for them—to have a brain-sick passenger descend from his clean deck to champion the cause of a scum.

The Virginian, looking down, was quivering visibly. As the passenger evaded a blow that would have crushed his ribs he could not forbear a shout. "Well done, by the Lord! But 'ware the clinch! 'Ware the clinch, Monsieur!"

For the mate, though maddened out of himself, had shown a sudden gleam of purpose. He was forcing the secretary back into a corner between bulwark and stanchion, not striking, his burly arms now stretched out widely. Even as Cary shouted, the arms gripped Armand like a vise, and the stinging rope's-end, useless now, fell to the deck.

Over the upper rail the passengers leaned, watching

"A shame!" cried one. "That bloody brute will kill him out of hand!"

"'Tis the clerk. Pshaw!" said the quartermaster. "He sides with the rabble; let the rabble care for him."

The woman who had been the unwitting cause of this struggle crouched back of the first sullenly intent rows, waiting, hugging her bundle. The others watched, guessing well what the issue would be—most of them accepting it as they had accepted the unspeakable fare, the cursings and revilings of the crew, with that stolid acceptance which, multiplied by centuries of heredity, had brought them at last to this same condition.

The Virginian leaned down with vibrant hopelessness. He looked to see the secretary, vised and crackled in those arms, drop limp and senseless. As he looked he saw Armand's face, very white, turn up to him.

Then, like lightning, a wonderful thing happened. The young man's chin sank deep into the hollow of the other's shoulder—his arms went up about the muscles of the bulky back—lithe legs like wire went suddenly curling and twisting about the stocky ones. A moment of strained silence and a glaze of shocked surprise on the mate's slashed face, then—

Crack! The coil untwisted, the mate relaxed, tottered and fell to the deck.

There was at this time in France a curious science known as "La Savate." The Japanese have it under another name. It was first taught in the thieving dens of Paris, and was to some extent popularized by a clever rogue who earned freedom from the Bastille by teaching it to young officers of title. It was an art of leg-fence; and by precisely the same twist and wring which a practised swordsman uses to disarm an adversary, the blade in this case being bone and flesh, Armand had sent the mate's knee leaping from its socket.

To the majority of those who saw it this was perfectly incomprehensible. A gasp of wonder ran among the redemptioners, and they laughed loudly at the mate's groan. The secretary had lost none of his alertness, though he was breathing hard. He sprang at the stanchion, clearly intending to return to the upper deck by the way he had come.

But he was too late. The mate's sailors rushed upon him.

Cary, shaking with excitement, sent out a cry.

"By Harry!" he shouted to the passengers about him. "Shall we see him that fought so beat like a dog? Are we poltroons, all?"

He leaped the rail, but before he could reach the

lower level, aid came to Armand, so hard beset. The skipper dived into the circle on a run, an evil light in his eyes and a marlinspike in his hand. He knocked the foremost senseless and the rest scattered.

"Damn yer entrails!" he bellowed. "Set on a passenger, ye dog-fish! By the devil, I'll mizzen ye naked! Get to work and take this away," he commanded, jerking a thumb at the mate who sat up, nursing his knee.

The woman, still holding the bundle, had pressed to the secretary's side and was pouring out a torrent of grateful incoherencies. Master Elves began cursing her with vigor, but Armand touched his arm.

"The babe is dead," he said. "Your mate would have cast it overboard. I ask for the mother a twelve-hours' time. If we do not sight land by then, I will ask no more."

But land was not to be seen that day. Next morning came, and the secretary's fight had been in vain. Then there was another gathering to the forward rail of the upper deck.

This was to watch the young Frenchman sitting among the redemptioners, sewing a round-shot carefully into the foot of a white silk bundle, the size of a babe. The mother, now with empty arms, trailed her long hair and sat red-eyed, sodden with weeping,

beside him. This done, he stitched over the silk neckerchief a clean canvas, and last of all sewed to its top a tiny gold cross which he took from his pocket. The bundle, held now by willing hands, was laid on a little board, whose end projected over the rail, and then Armand, with bared head, took his stand beside it, and they heard his voice repeating part of the Huguenot service for the dead.

Few understood the words, for they were French, but all grasped their meaning. The fresh cheeks of the girls were wet with tears. The toilers' seamed faces were pitiful. Even the crime-smirched ones were softer. And the mother was satisfied. Had not her child been blessed? To her none but a priest could perform such a rite, and Armand, though wearing no cassock, was yet, in some mysterious way, a priest.

So are we all His ministers!

CHAPTER V

THE TOSS OF A COIN

The York-town wharf was a fair sight to the passengers of the Two Sisters as the ship swung to her moorings. Beyond the yellow clay bank the shore glowed in a violet-green dazzle of foliage—a flame of amethyst and pink, and over all the sun hung hazy, like some splendid dream-rose, strewing its petals upon a bay of tinted glass.

The bank behind the wharf was a fringe of negroes, their vacant-minded happiness shaking out laughter as wind shakes blossoms from a locust tree. The gay colored turbans bobbed like variegated poppies on a breezy day. The planking below was sprinkled with townfolk, and on the road behind it several chariots were drawn up at some distance.

In advance of these and in the rear of the crowd, with Betsy Byrd in the saddle beside it, stood the Tillotson coach, framing in its window a face with a flicker of laughter over it like the wind on a May

meadow. Anne was in close green, and with her oak-yellow hair looked a gold spear rising straight from its sheath. As early as noon one of the Tillotson blacks had ridden to Gladden Hall with the news that the ship had been sighted down the bay, and Anne had ordered the chariot forthwith. Betsy had a new peacock shawl coming in Master Elves's care, and had made the pilgrimage from Williamsburg every day for a week.

"What a pity!" exclaimed Anne, who had been first to arrive. "Mr. Cary—Breckinridge Cary—came on the ship, but she lay in Hampton Roads last night and he there found a packet for Philadelphia. So we shall not see him till the spring."

"I'm sorry," Betsy answered. "Frank saw him in London. What a lot there are here! There is Burnaby Rolph of Westham, here for more redemptioners, no doubt. He bought a round dozen last ship. Why doesn't he leave that for his factor, like a gentleman, I wonder?"

Anne looked at the man she indicated—of medium height, with a sheep-face, long in the tooth—and turned away with a little shudder. He stood with thick legs planted firmly, talking with a neighbor, his head turned over his shoulder, and as they looked he raised his sword-hilt and struck savagely at a black who jostled him. "Poor servants who fall

into Mr. Rolph's hands. I pity them!" she said, in a low voice.

"John-the-Baptist," she called to her mounted servant. "Did you go down to inquire about Miss Betsy's chest, as I told you?"

"Yas'm, yas'm. Done been down dar twic't."

"Are you sure?"

"Yas'm, on meh honah!"

"Honor!" Anne said, severely. "What do you know about honor, John-the-Baptist?"

The darkey responded with a ragged grin. "I uster hab er heap er honah," he said vaguely, "but I got so 'strav'gant wid it I spec' I ain' got much lef' now."

"Look yonder, Anne," whispered Betsy. "Isn't that a genteel-looking young man? What a lovely brown his hair is. He's looking this way. His coat has a foreign cut; I warrant he came on the ship. There is Master Brooke standing by him now."

Anne's eyes showed her a gray coat unslashed, plain hose and shoes with a neat steel buckle—a dress neither rich nor poor. There was no lace upon the hat, no paste knee-buckles, no sword—none of the marks of distinction. But the face was open and the nut-dark eyes frank and clear.

She had gazed but a moment when a familiar

red-coat shouldered its way through the press. She bit her lip and turned her head away, but Betsy was deep in chat with young Mr. Carlyle, kinsman to the Belvoir Fairfaxes—a youth lean as a rake, of a pale disposition, all hair and eyes.

The new-comer strode to the steps with assurance and touched Anne's fingers with his lips. "Still so cold—so far away? Still cherishing a frown for me?"

"I looked not to see you, Captain Jarrat."

"I am but just returned from London."

"On the Two Sisters?"

"Aye," he answered, with a slumbering flush on his face. "The moth returns to the lamp—a pretty conceit, is it not?"

She moved her shoulders with a gesture of impatience.

"Why am I doomed to be ever in your bad graces, Mistress Tillotson? Oh, 'tis true. I would it were not! 'Twas so in Williamsburg. Had you a smile for me? 'Twas when I went. Well, I return to the frown."

"I have naught else for you. I have told you so."

"And yet," he said, constrainedly, "for another kind of look from you I would forget all else. I would change all, risk all. Can I never win aught

from such a love as mine? Will you never tell me how to change myself for you? Shall I go always wanting?" A fierce and unhappy passion was written in his face.

She turned from him coldly. "I beg you will not recur to that, Captain," she said. "My answer was my answer. I can never give you more."

He touched his breast, drawing his hand across the gold slashings of his coat. "Is it this? Do you frown upon his Majesty's uniform? I swear I would I were a Whig!"

"A Tory before a turn-coat," she answered him.

Jarrat shut his teeth like a trap. Then without reply he bowed to her and strode toward the ship. Betsy, turning her horse, saw only his vanishing figure, Anne's face a flush-red gust of anger and her eyes gleaming like blue ice.

"Why," exclaimed she in surprise. "'Twas Captain Jarrat!"

"I wish," said Anne, with temper, giving Betsy's horse a slap that made him dance and called forth a curdling scream from its rider—"I wish Captain Jarrat was in Guinea!"

As Jarrat stepped on to the deck, the gang-way was thrown down for the herded human cattle that had thronged the lower deck. Sixty odd, they came trooping out to where the factors were gathered;

and the ship's agent at once began the bidding by offering a convict smith bound for seven years and allowed only diet and lodging, who, he declared, made great diversion by singing and whistling, besides being rare at iron work.

The sale proceeded rapidly, for bond-servants were in demand and the lot was above an average one. They stood for inspection eagerly or stolidly, as their faces promised, some sullen-eyed, some smirking. The women were offered last. But few remained when the agent beckoned to the swarthy-skinned woman whose babe had died during the voyage, and she came forward timidly, turning her sloe-black Italian eyes upon the crowd in misunderstanding and cowering dread. Her hair and the red olive of her skin made a curious contrast to the light complexions of the other women.

Burnaby Rolph, who had purchased two laborers, looked her over with satisfaction.

"A likely wench," he gulped. "Twenty pounds is enough, I doubt not, since she is foreign. I take her. Put that down to my reckoning, Master Clarkson."

"Poor thing," said Anne. "I would I were a man. That brute should never have her!" She looked up and felt the young Frenchman's eyes full upon her. He had clearly overheard.

"You belong to *him* now," said the agent to the woman, pointing to Rolph. "D'ye understand?"

She gazed into Rolph's face and shrinkingly about the circle. Then, with a sudden cry, doubling like an animal, she dodged between the knots of spectators and threw herself at Armand's feet.

Rolph's curse was lost in a great laugh which rose from the factors, and Anne's face stung red at a coarse remark from one of them.

Monsieur Armand did not seem nonplussed. He stooped and lifted the cringing woman to her feet as Rolph approached, his lean eyes winking.

"My wench seems to have an uncommon fancy," the latter sneered. "Gall me, why did you not buy her?"

"Will you sell her to me?"

The other looked at the secretary's dress and glowered at the merriment of the onlookers.

"No," he blurted.

Armand smiled with suavity. "Perhaps it would pleasure you to game with me for her? In my country, gentlemen," he remarked to those around, "we are over-fond of the dice-table. As for me—I could never resist to woo the hazard of fortune. Mayhap, however, here you are less adventurous. More cautious, Monsieur, or, as those who, having little, hesitate to risk."

Rolph grunted at this airy thrust and gnawed his lip. His estate of Bentcliff was the largest on all the James, and this, it was said, he had won in the palace in Williamsburg fifteen years before, in a wild night of play with Governor Fauquier's gambling crew.

"I will lay against her," added Armand, "double the amount she cost you. And a toss of a coin shall decide."

The factors gasped and stood looking the speaker over. Rolph stared an instant, then: "Damn my pluck—done! Leave the indenture open, Master Clarkson, and bring it here."

A wager in Virginia never failed to provoke interest, whether it were for a pair of spurs or a pipe of canary, and now all were listening eagerly. The two girls, from their positions, could see without difficulty over the intervening heads.

"Let us go farther away," said Anne. But Betsy was of a different mind. "No, no," she protested. "They are going to toss. I wouldn't miss it now for anything. He is French, Anne; I can tell by the accent."

Rolph called and threw the gold coin he had drawn from his pocket, with a flourish. "The king's head!" rose a score of voices as it fell; "Mr. Rolph wins."

"Oh dear!" exclaimed Betsy in great vexation.

"I really believe," said Anne with heat, "that you want that man to win."

"Weren't you just now wishing you were a man so Mr. Rolph shouldn't?" retorted Betsy.

Monsieur Armand had drawn forth a wallet from his pocket and lifted out the sum. "Fortune beams upon you, Monsieur," he smiled. "I was ever unlucky of a Wednesday. Shall we have one more throw? And double or quits, mayhap, Monsieur? Unless you deem the stake over high . . . "

"High!" said Rolph with a growl. "Double or quits it is. Eighty pounds against your lost forty and the wench. But, mind you, this one throw ends it. D'ye hear?"

The other tossed. There was a shout as the coin descended, for it lodged in the brim of a spectator's hat and could not be counted. At the next trial it rolled in a spiral and finally stood edgewise in a crack of the wharf flooring.

A third time the young Frenchman sent it spinning. It twinkled in the sunlight, fell, bounded sideways, the crowd parting before it, rolled across the open space and toppled over a few feet from Anne. Instinctively she leaned far out of the coach and looked.

"It shows the arms!" she cried in spite of herself. The coin had fallen on its obverse side.

"Fortune has turned," the secretary observed easily. "It appears, Monsieur, that the servant is mine. The remainder of the stake, if you please."

"'Twas but his assurance he wagered with," snarled Rolph. "It will not hold. What does this sorry raiment with thus much money, gentlemen? He does not own so much. I dispute the bet."

"And Mr. Rolph calls himself a gentleman!" Anne said disgustedly.

Monsieur Armand looked at his antagonist with undisguised contempt, and the murmurs of the assembly, who loved fair play, were so unmistakable that Rolph drew out bills and indenture with a curse and drove off with a black look.

Anne watched him go, a curl on her lip. When she turned at Betsy's exclamation, it was first to be aware that all on the wharf were looking her way, that some of them were smiling, and then that the young Frenchman, with the redemptioner woman following him, was approaching her.

Before she had recovered from her astonishment he was bowing low. "Mademoiselle," he said, "will pardon the liberty I take in addressing her?"

She bowed coldly, half startled.

"Fate," he went on, "has made me the owner of

this servant for whom, being no landholder, I have scant use. She speaks a strange tongue and is in a strange land, and to free her without bond-time were small kindness. May I beg the favor, Mademoiselle, that you take her in your service, demanding such labor as will requite her support?"

The indignant color flooded Anne's brow. "Sir!" she said frigidly, drawing herself up. "We have strange surprises in Virginia. But surely the effrontery of our visitors surpasses them all."

Armand looked clearly at her out of his dark eyes. "Mademoiselle will pardon," he answered, "the error of one of these visitors who, seeing her face, has overestimated her graciousness and charity."

With this he bowed again till his hat swept the ground, and, followed by the bondwoman, walked down the wharf toward the unlading vessel.

The red in Anne's cheeks had grown to fire-brands and her anger lent sting to the half-concealed smirks of those who stood nearest.

"Land of mercy!" said Betsy with emphasis. "What impudence!"

Soon the curious crowd was thinning, Betsy's search was ended and Anne, having left her seat in the coach, watched at nearer view the disgorging of the cargo.

Here Brooke came primed with a new sensation.

This was nothing less than the tale of a fight which had occurred during the voyage between the mate of the vessel and a passenger. Anne's eyes were very soft as he finished.

"And who d'ye think," he ended, "was this champion? Why, the young Frenchman yonder that you crushed so mercilessly, Mistress Tillotson!"

"And the redemptioner woman?" asked Anne, with something like dread.

"'Twas the wench he won from Burnaby Rolph!"

"Oh!" The cadence was full of liquid self-reproach.

"Where are you going?" Betsy asked as Anne rose. She did not answer, but walked quickly across the wharf to the spot where Armand stood. He made no movement as she came.

"Monsieur . . " she faltered and stopped.

His hat was in his hand instantly and he was gravely deferential.

"I wish to take back," she went on, "my words of a while ago. I assure you they were not rudely meant. I—"

He stayed her with a gesture. "What am I that Mademoiselle should speak thus? I was brusque, unmannerly—"

"No, no!"

"I forgot where I was—forgot that I had not

the joy of knowing her—forgot everything but what I saw in her face as she sat in the chariot. For I am a great magician, Mademoiselle; I know all who are lovely and gracious of heart."

"I was wrong," she said proudly. "And for this I ask your pardon. May—may I have the bond-servant?"

He smiled gaily now and bowed low to her. "To be treated with such pleasant surgery, all the world would be glad of wounds," he cried. "You recompense me a thousand times!"

He signed to the serving-woman who sat stolidly upon a near-by chest, and pointed from himself to Anne. She understood, and when Anne put her in charge of John-the-Baptist to take on ahead a-pillion, she went without question.

Betsy watched this transaction open-mouthed.

"Did you ever!" she gasped. "I wonder what mother will say to that!"

Armand had stepped to position, hat under arm, at the coach door. "Mademoiselle will permit me to assist her?" he asked, and gave her the tips of his fingers. His eyes were bright on her face.

On the step she stopped, half turned, a delicate flush coming to her cheek—a flush that deepened to damask at his look. She hesitated an instant as if about to speak, then suddenly entered,

sat down, gave the word to the driver and was whirled away. The secretary stood looking after the retreating chariot.

"A splendid creature," purred Brooke at his elbow, "albeit you found her wintry."

"Wintry!" exclaimed the young man—"she who is made only of summer, its incense, its colors, its dreams. Yours is an enchanted land, Monsieur, and she its goddess."

"Egad! I'll make a sonnet on that!" exclaimed Brooke. "Sink me, but it's coming back!" The latter remark was applied to the chariot which had turned and was now approaching more slowly the spot where they stood.

As it drew up, Anne leaned from the window. "Monsieur," she called, "I had quite forgot to speak of the indenture."

He drew it from his pocket and held it out to her.

"Such have to be conveyed, I make sure," she said, looking at it doubtfully. "Your delicacy, sir, forbade you to set me right. We shall have to sign and witness a deed and what not, I suppose."

"'Tis a plain indenture," said Brooke, peering.

She drew it away sharply. "Alas! we women know so little of business. I bethink me my father will wish to receipt to you for it."

"Mademoiselle—"

"Aye, but he will. At any rate, you would not be so ungallant as to have me blamed, sir? Will you not ride to Gladden Hall with me? 'Tis scarce a half-league away."

"Mademoiselle!"

"Your father is in Williamsburg, Mistress," ventured the exquisite. "I chanced to overhear him say this morning he would remain over at Colonel Byrd's until to-morrow."

Anne frowned. "I fear you did not hear aright, sir," she returned coldly. Then with an enchanting smile she opened the coach door and made room for the secretary beside her. "I await you, Monsieur," she said, her eyes like fringed gentians. He bowed to her with a new light on his face, entered, and closed the door.

"Home, Rashleigh," she cried to the driver, and the heavy coach rolled away.

"Wintry!" said the fop to himself with a chuckle. "Methinks report does the lady wrong."

Jarrat, meanwhile, had been sitting in the skipper's dingy cabin,—for Master Elves had now transferred responsibility to the ship's agent,—his face properly smoothed to good-fellowship, over a noggin of rum from the locker. He had long ago cultivated a new affability with the master of the Two

Sisters. Now he had an errand, though he was somewhat long in coming to the point.

"The Marquis de la Trouerie," he said finally and in a purely casual way, as he smacked his lips. "It was nigh two months since that he died, if I remember."

The mariner took down his log from the shelf and turning it with a hairy thumb, pushed it across the board. The other looked at it closely and laid the book open before him. Incidentally he filled up the glasses. "Knew you aught of his affairs in this Colony?" he queried.

One might have noticed that the eyes opposite narrowed perceptibly.

"Not I," answered the skipper. "I hold to my own helm."

"A close tongue," vouchsafed Jarrat, "makes a wide purse."

The drift of this succinct remark was not lost upon his companion, who discreetly kept his eyes upon his glass.

The speaker continued, dropping his voice and leaning on the table: "The marquis and I had somewhat of business together although we never met. In fact, I made this voyage at his own request. Now, to be frank, the news of his death will not aid a mutual venture of ours here in Virginia, which,

for my part, has gone too far for backing. Zooks! A mortal pity to publish it!"

There was interest and speculation in the narrow eyes, if nothing more. Something jingled. It may have been the visitor's sword-knot, or a hand in a pocket. The skipper was not deaf.

"The passengers?" he hazarded.

"They are off for the North to-day. Boston blab will not hurt me; 'tis the Gazettes here I care about. As for the factors, they are bent on business. Our young Virginia wool-sack has gone to Pennsylvania. I'll risk him."

"There's the marquis's secretary."

Jarrat snapped his fingers. "He'll be cheap. I know the breed. A leaf lost from a log is no great matter," he continued slowly as though to himself. Again the jingle. The skipper cleared his throat.

Jarrat's hand slowly, very slowly, tore out the leaf, folded it and placed it in his pocket-book. Yellow disks passed across the table.

"I'll be keel-hauled if I see your game," said the skipper.

The other smiled. "I'll be keel-hauled if I see why you should," said he.

Brooke was scarce done twisting his love-lock when Jarrat crossed the wharf from the ship hot

from his bargain with the skipper. He made inquiries concerning a young gentleman dressed in gray and by good luck hit upon an apprentice lad who told him he had carried the young gentleman's chest to the Swan Tavern at which he had been directed to bespeak supper and lodging.

CHAPTER VI

TWO IN A CHARIOT

For some time the two in the coach rode in silence. The way, when they had left the clustered shipping of the town behind them, wound along the reed-rimmed bank of the river where plethoric crows cawed to their mates. The afternoon had come with a vivid sky burning to a char on the horizon. The young secretary gazed out of the open window, and through it the wind came, sweet with the clean smell of dry grass. Anne stole a side glance from under drooping lids.

"You are deeply occupied, Monsieur," she said at length, with a lurking thread of sarcasm. "I should not marvel, since all Virginia lies just outside."

He threw her a smile that softened his clean-cut mouth and lightened his eyes. "All Virginia is not outside the window—for me, Mademoiselle."

With a woman, it is the new sensation which captivates. Mistress Tillotson had been used enough

to pretty speeches—the beaux of half Virginia had recited quatrains to her fan. Here was an unaccustomed subtlety.

"Yet your eyes were there," she rejoined. "Had your thought fled still farther? Over-sea, mayhap?"

He met her look full-eyed. "Shall I tell you of what I was thinking? I have seen many fair ladies in my own land—gracious and kind belike—but few whose charity could reach to an object so far beneath them as a bondwoman; fewer yet whose graciousness would lead them to sue for pardon from a stranger—like me."

"I," she answered more lightly, "was thinking of how the frost has set the woods afire. Saw you ever such copper-reds and russet-golds? And those wedges of pink rock—they have the look of raspberries crushed in curdled milk. God is spendthrift of His hues."

The country through which they passed was hung with the marvelous colors which a Virginian autumn lavishes so prodigally. There was the maroon of the wild rose-stalk, the ripe-brown seams of butternut bark, and the shifting tints the sun lends the frosted alder; the gray lichen and bronze fir splotched with scarlet creeper and stippled mosses like saffron butterflies. Here and there showed the

splash of a bluebird's wing or the vermilion crest of a king-fisher.

"It is very fair," he said, "as it should be."

Again a silence fell while the road swung across forest stretches, under springing roofs through which the sky swam in dazzles.

At last she spoke demurely:

"And of what else were you thinking, Monsieur?"

"I was thinking what you are most like. Some ladies are like snow-mountains that stand very far off—white and beautiful, but cold—so cold you can not warm them, and so high. Some are like blossoms, sweet and perfumed, made for only a nose-gay in the evening; when the sun is hot they wither. Some are like a song that one hears and thinks lovely—hums it a while and forgets."

"And which of these am I, sir?"

"You are like a sword—slim and shining and straight and yet delicate. It took centuries to make the sword, Mademoiselle. It will bend, bend, but not break. It is sharp and cold to all the world save one—the one who wears it at his side. But to his touch it becomes alive to ward him harm, to guard his life, to keep his honor."

"An we were truly swords," she flashed "—we ladies of Virginia—there were less of bitterness in this fair Colony of ours."

"So the sword has the temper," he cried, his eyes kindling. "It is not for ornament alone! And these troubles of the Colonies—they strike so deeply then? Do even the ladies of a land such as this feel the sting?"

She gazed out toward the low-knobbed hills limned against the deepening sky, her elbow on the window sill, her chin in her gloved hand, silent. Above them, in sun-stained air, shreds of torn clouds folded away like dreams. From near-by came the startled flutter of field larks and the rustle of ripening corn.

The road curved quickly and lurched into a pine forest, where the day filmed to twilight and the hoofs fell noiselessly into a carpet of brown needles. It was a pleasant way, full of mingled odors, all strangely pure and agreeable, where clamorous wood-things piped to a musical silence.

"'Tis not all Virginia after all that one sees here, Monsieur," she said slowly, after a time. "Far to the west of us is a vast region, raw, full-veined and of scattered tenants. There are great mountain peaks and ravines, wastes waiting seed and hoe, plateaus and woodlands where the musket and the ax are never silent. Deer run in the brake. Wolves race along the ridges. There strong men have lived and toiled and fought back the savages

and cleared themselves homes. Their children have grown up unyielding like the granite in the mountain's heart, untrameled like its torrents. And this life amid the silences has taught them a justice that may not be bought, a strength that knows neither fear nor favor. The region you see here, Monsieur, to this great weave I speak of is but the raveled edge.

"Here broad rivers run brackish with tide-water, and ships lie at the wharves. They bring to our manor-houses all of luxury and refinement which Virginia tobacco can buy. And here the planters, (for Virginia was first settled by gentlemen, Monsieur,) choose to put on courtliness and dress in gold-lace and make a bit of London for themselves on the edge of the wilderness.

"Just beyond those hills, to the southward, is Williamsburg, the capital they have built. It has a college and a court. There the cocks are ever fighting, the horses are ever running, the fiddles are ever playing, and there in his palace sits the royal governor his Majesty is pleased to put over his Colonials, levying on their leaf and sneering at their buckskins."

"The Earl of Dunmore?"

"Aye, my Lord the earl. Think you he knows one whit more of this Virginia than does the king,

a thousand leagues away? He drinks in his palace and drives his white horses and bullies his burgesses—the representatives whom the people have elected. They must pleasure him or he dissolves them. The king has forgot that the Virginians are Englishmen, and that Englishmen love freedom."

"And Englishwomen, too," he said.

"We can do little," she went on. "We wear no swords. All we can do is to hope and to wait."

"Little!" There was a thrill in his tone. "Little! You call such a hope—such a feeling small? You think it valueless or weak? Ah, Mademoiselle! Know you what makes a lady adorable to a man's heart? What makes him worship her? It is that she inspires him—that is it! Not to dress for her, or bow or sing her little songs. But to toil, to struggle, to fight, to die maybe—something high like the stars. Man has a want for two things—a cause to fight for first, and then—then a one, a perfect one, a loved face, to wait and smile on him when he has won.

"With this a man could do miracles! Ah, it could make of a poor nobody a king, an emperor! I, even I, Mademoiselle, a stranger from another land, I could fight so well for these great things, for this Virginia of yours, if I—if I—"

He paused. There was a tense moment.

Then the air filled itself with a long, dull sigh, and on its train came a sudden snapping of dead boughs, an unjointed, cracking report, and both looked up startled.

A strange, far-away circumstance had had part in this. Indians had not been used to fell trees as did their white conquerors. Instead, they cut deep rings into the bark and let nature be axman. These trunks fell when dry-rot had done its work, sometimes in storms, often when no wind stirred, crashing in a forested silence. A quarter century before, perhaps, a Mattapony brave had thus girdled a great pine with his tomahawk; and it was this dead tree, its limbs now white as bleached wolf-bones, which was now, after its time, leaning to its fall from the roadside.

A shriek burst from Anne's lips as she saw the toppling bulk through the window, and she started to her feet. Simultaneously came a howl of terror from Rashleigh and a leaping jerk from the horses as he tried to lash them to safety.

There was an instant when the huge bole seemed to hang motionless in the air above them—an instant in which Anne frenziedly wrenched open the door and made as if to leap out. The same instant Armand seized her, dragged her back and

threw himself and her against the rear wall of the chariot.

She struggled, but he forced her back and held her, as the groaning mass came to earth with a crash that rocked the ground.

Anne, conscious even in her ecstasy of fright of a sense of safety in his arms, felt the body of the coach crush like an egg-shell. She had hidden her face on his breast and shut her eyes, waiting the end. The whole world was a splinter of glass, a ripping of boarding, a sickening jumble of thuds, through which stabbed the agonized squeals of the horses.

Then there was stillness, broken by Rashleigh's sobbing scream—

"De good Lawd, Mis' Anne! De good Lawd . . is yo' daid?"

She opened her eyes and looked up. The riven trunk lay right athwart the forward cushions, where it had crashed its way through. A great gnarled limb, broken off, thrust itself a yard from her face and through the jagged edges of the top she saw the far foliage swaying. Armand's face bent above her. It was white and strained with an anguish that was slipping away, but it was calm.

Rashleigh's head appeared at the wrecked window, his features blue-black with fear.

"Bress Gord!" he stammered, his grizzled forelock working. "Bress His name! So yo' ain' hurt, honey? Den I gwineter ketch de hosses 'fore dey scare missus to def'!"

The head withdrew, and Anne tried to smile up at Armand.

"We are safe," she said, speaking slowly like a child. "I know. 'Twas—so sudden. Let me—wait a moment." She closed her eyes again, sick and faint in the reaction.

He did not speak at once, but she felt his arms, which were under and around her, shake with a little tremor and draw her closer.

"Suppose," she breathed, her eyes still closed, "suppose it had struck nearer?"

"We should not have felt it. A quick death and merciful."

She shuddered.

"They would have found us—so," he said with an under-breath.

She lifted her head at this and started, the color coming back to her lips. "Help me out."

Stooping under the splintered door-frame, he assisted her to the ground. It was a hurly of broken branches, sprangling spokes, thrusting springs and distorted fragments of wood. A

snapped limb a foot in thickness lay with its end upon the bent and twisted step.

"Had I leaped, it would have struck me!"

"Yes," he answered.

"So swift and terrible!" she said, her voice catching. "Like a bolt from a cloud; like the judgment. That moment . . I would not live it again for worlds!"

He spoke with a flame in his cheeks. "And I —I would I might! Ah, I would endure all agonies for that moment again, that moment when—"

"Monsieur!"

He stopped at the indignation in her tone.

"Let us go," she said. "Gladden Hall is just behind these pines."

"I beg you—"

"Bethink, sir," she added coldly, "that so late as yesterday I had never seen you!"

"So late as yesterday!" he cried. "To measure all things by the hands of the clock! What has time to do with the feeling of the heart? Is death all that comes suddenly, unexpectedly? Are there no sweeter things that come as swiftly? Ah, a man can live a year in an hour, Mademoiselle—a lifetime within one little day! Yesterday, you say? Mademoiselle, yesterday for me were only dim waters, and gray sky; now there are flowers and

birds and laughter and all glad things. Shall I tell you what has changed it all? The moment you spoke to me on the wharf—the hour we have ridden side by side along the fields—most of all, Mademoiselle, the moment you will not have me tell you of—that one moment I lived, when death came falling out of the sky upon us—when you cried out—when—"

"Stop!" she protested, her hands to her red cheeks.

"When your face was on my shoulder—I felt your breath! You clung to me—to me—you, the fairest lady God has made! My arms were around you."

"Oh!" she gasped. "No more! You have no right—"

"Right?"

"No!" she cried stormily, her breast rising and falling. "No! You presume upon a danger into which fate thrust me without my wish. Why, we have but ridden a half league; I know not even your name! Who are you to speak thus to me?"

"Who am I?" repeated the young man slowly, the rich color dyeing his face. "I am—only a Frenchman, Mademoiselle. Only a man who gazed upon your face in a crowd and whom—whom you asked to ride beside you in the coach."

His tone had fallen. "Is it his fault, Mademoiselle, if his custom is not the custom of your land —if he knows not to repress—if he must say what he feels?" He finished very low. "Is it his fault that he can not forget that your face hid itself upon his breast . . for one little moment here in the forest?"

She was alternately flushing and paling and her eyes were shining. "You must not! You must not!" she cried out with softer voice.

With the words she started walking rapidly, hastening, without glancing at him. The dimness of the interlaced branches overhead parted, the trees stood sparser. Just ahead a leafy arch let in the fading sunlight and a view of yellow stubble, and beyond this showed a broad gateway—twin brick pillars crested with martlets—opening on a winding road to a great house that looked a many-windowed welcome.

It sat snuggled in elms, on a hill from whose crest a terraced lawn fell softly into the arms of the shining, twisted river—a southern home in its high days, its dairy, meat-house, ice-house and granaries all dazzling white against the blue and olive of sky and wood. Spacious offices stood to the left and wide negro quarters squatted at some distance behind it. Near-by a tiny creek sparkled

down to wash a tangle of islands. From adjacent fields came the piping whistle of partridges in grass.

Just before the gateway the young man's voice caught her. "For the sake of that one moment, Mademoiselle . . " he said huskily.

She paused—looked back—and held out her hand. He dropped upon one knee and touched his lips to her fingers.

"I am glad I owe my life to you," she said softly.

Gazing at him uncertainly an instant, she hesitated, then turned and ran rapidly up the winding drive. Her hound lifted his shag-head from the columned porch and came leaping down to meet her, while his whine drew Mammy Evaline peering from the kitchen door, her weather-beaten face dilating into a smile.

"Lawd, dar come mammy's honey-chile safe an' soun'!" she cried to Mrs. Tillotson, who came hastily to the steps and waved her hand at the girl's fluttering signal.

"Down, Sweetlips! Down!" cried Anne, as the hound leaped against her. She stopped, bethinking herself of the indenture.

She ran back to the gateway, but the young Frenchman was not to be seen. As she stood peering into the pines, the breeze went playing with some torn bits of paper, scattered in the ruts. She

picked up several fragments and strove to decipher them: "which term the said bond-servant faithfully shall serve" . . . "does covenant with the said Louis Armand, holder," she read.

Then she caught her breath, and, forbearing to glance in the direction of the forest road, walked toward the anxious figure on the porch of the great house.

CHAPTER VII

THE MAKING OF A MARQUIS

In the Swan Tavern, which lifted its yellow Holland-brick front and peaked shingle roof not far from the York-town river-front, the candles had been early lighted that night. There, as day fainted out, supping at his ease at a table in the long parlor, sat a man of middle age, whose effrontery and insolence had long ago earned him cordial hatred throughout Williamsburg. He was Captain Foy, aide to Governor Dunmore.

He looked up as another guest entered, and dropped his knife clattering.

"Jarrat!" he cried. "I thought you were in London."

"So I was, so I was, but I am returned to-day," Jarrat answered easily. "How goes it at Williamsburg, Captain Foy? And how does Governor Dunmore with that ant-hill of disloyalty?"

"He is away with the troops to quell the Indians

on the Pennsylvania boundary. He will not see Williamsburg again before November. You stayed not long abroad. I heard you were gone for a year of off-duty pleasuring."

"These Virginias get in the blood." Jarrat simulated a sigh. "I have lost the old-land love, I fear."

He did not see fit to tell the true reason of his sea voyage, or that he had been more in Paris than in London. He was a more subtle servant of Dunmore's than the governor's aide, who dreamed he knew all of the great man's mind.

"What has happened since I left, Captain?" he finished.

The other got up, pulled the door to carefully and came back. "Jarrat, I wonder if I shall ever see you royal governor of this Colony you love so well."

Jarrat had risen with an exclamation.

"Sit down, man," said Foy. "'Ods bods! 'Tis a fair enough ambition. Why not? You are young, and you can do much yet for Lord Dunmore. The king rewards his servants. Damme, I like you the better for aiming high! Stranger things have happened. Methinks Mistress Tillotson would not frown so upon a royal governor, eh?"

Jarrat sat down again. It is a harrowing moment when one's most secret thought is laid bare

at a slash. He waited to hear what the other might say.

"Affairs are awry here," Foy continued, "and I must overtake the governor with advices. Meanwhile there is an important matter I intend to tell you. I judge I can speak plain. You may be able to assist in a delicate undertaking, and you can rest easy Dunmore will not be ungrateful. Nor will the king, neither."

A keenness came into Jarrat's face. "Say on," he said.

"Very well. Here it is in a nut-shell. As you perchance know, Lord Stormont in Paris has been at much pains to keep informed of the feeling in the French court. He has lately reported a growing danger. That rascally son of a tinker, Beaumarchais, whose schemes so tickled the fancy of the old king, has been buzzing about Louis the Sixteenth to some purpose. De Vergennes, his dog of a councillor, was always itching to comfort the Colonies. Well, the matter has come to a head and France's aid is in a fair way to be pledged in the near future to the Colonies. Egad, Jarrat, an the rebels' Congress knew all that is in the wind at Versailles, they would split themselves with joy!"

"I warrant," said the listener, non-committal.

"Louis," pursued Foy, "is pretty well assured of

affairs in the north, thanks to that renegade Franklin, but as to the Virginias, he is not so certain. So he is sending over one of his noble popinjays to see for him and report. 'Twas rumored in Paris that the envoy was to be the Marquis de la Trouerie."

"I have heard of the gentleman," said Jarrat with careful deliberation; "another young poppet of Marie Antoinette's, and a worse republican than Beaumarchais. And you think he will report that Virginia is ripe for insurrection?"

"Think! Why, the whole Colony is a seethe of it. To be sure he will. Trust the courtier to smooth the king the way he would be smoothed."

"When does the gentleman arrive?"

"A fortnight since word came hither by the Royal George that he was soon to take ship."

Jarrat smiled beneath his hand. Knowing himself so close to the governor's confidence, he could afford to be amused. Moreover, he had had more than one meeting while abroad with Lord Stormont in regard to this same matter. Foy's hangman's humor, however, made him a favorite with Lord Dunmore, and it was still worth Jarrat's while to cultivate him.

"I am flattered that you confide in me," he said.

"But what will you do with him when he comes? You can not seize his person?"

"Why not?" cried Foy pettishly. "There's more to his coming than that, Jarrat. He will report 'aye' to this venture of the king's. Well, Louis needs no further messenger. He will straightway make the marquis his envoy. And think you the visitor need be let deliver that message? By the fiend, no! Seize his person, eh? We shall see, Jarrat! The earl knows his muttons. Meanwhile, this marquis must be watched for. We must know where to put a finger on him. The lower ports are well under espionage. But some of us must watch here at York-town. 'Tis what I want you to do, Jarrat. Gad's life! 'Tis too delicate a matter to entrust to any boggler."

"Again you flatter me." Jarrat had been studying Foy through half-shut eyes; now he opened them.

"Enough, Captain; I accept the commission. I take it upon myself to welcome the noble sojourner should he land here. Who knows, I might even make friends with him."

"Good!" Foy's look wore relief. "I can leave to-morrow for Winchester, then, and shall tell Lord Dunmore that I have confided in you."

"Tell his Excellency," Jarrat responded as the other rose, "that I shall keep a sharp eye for the marquis. From the moment he lands, I shall be his shadow. A pleasant journey, Captain. Leave everything to me."

"And now," said Foy, "for a bottle of old sherry."

Jarrat went to the yard to see him go, and when he had disappeared, turned his eye to a narrow, blank window under the shingle roof.

"Louis will send another messenger when the news reaches France. When it *reaches* France," he muttered. Then, more slowly—"*When* it reaches France!"

He stood musing a moment, turned and entered the door.

The radiant Frenchman that evening, returning to the Swan afoot through the late dusk-fall, went up the tavern stair to find that the door of his chamber stood ajar. An exclamation of surprise escaped him; he mounted quickly and went in.

Jarrat sat there by the little table, waiting.

"Ah!" said the secretary. His eye darted swiftly to his chest in the corner. Then he crossed the room and tried the lid. It had not been opened.

"I am no common thief, curse it!" spat out Jarrat.

"No?" observed Armand with a rising inflection. "Monsieur will pardon me. I did not know." He sat down composedly. "To what do I owe this pleasure?" tentatively.

Jarrat leaned elbows on the table and regarded him. "You are no fool," he said at length. "All the better."

Monsieur Armand wore a look of polite inquiry.

"My word for it," said Jarrat suddenly. "There are richer paymasters than Louis the Sixteenth."

The other fronted him fiercely, menacingly. "What mean you?" he cried.

Jarrat laughed. "You see that I know what was the marquis's business in the Colonies."

He went and closed the door.

"Now," he said, returning, "Monsieur Armand, master secretary, clerk of a dead master, I have a proposition to make to you."

"And if," said the young foreigner slowly, a half-hour later, looking across into the ferret eyes, "if I do this—what you call it?—masquerade—If I, the humble secretary, the clerk, as you have said it, become changed for the purposes of my Lord the earl, to the courtier, the noble . . . "

He paused. They were sitting at ease now, and on Jarrat's face satisfaction was spread thinly, like

oil. The ingratiating mood became him and his companion's distrustful look had vanished into something that smacked more of friendliness.

"Think you not," the latter finished, "that these Virginians will know the difference?"

"'Sblood!" scoffed Jarrat. "What know they here in the desert of French nobles? No more than my Lord Bishop of London's scullery maid!"

An expression of curious intentness lurked in Armand's face. He was silent, searching the other with half-smiling gaze.

"And the life. Like you balls and dances with the quality? You shall be sought after. Would you set the fashions for the gallants? They will jostle the lackeys to hob with you. Gad's life! The Colonials are cubs at bootlicking a lord! The fat of the land, I tell you—rides, hunts, dances, wenches—and a merry season."

The secretary's eyes sparkled. "You think I would do it well?" he asked naïvely. "Ah, you never saw my master. He was a real nobleman. He was born so. One can not learn it, Monsieur. It is in the blood. But I? I? I have not the *ton,* the address?" He looked inquiringly at the other.

"Pshaw!" Jarrat said. "I suppose your master was fine enough, but fine feathers will do it.

There's not one of them will scent the difference. I know them!"

Monsieur Armand's lids were drooped, his face thoughtful.

"You wish me," he reflected slowly, "to do two things. My master, as you have guessed—he was to be the eye of the king of France in the Virginias. Very good. You want me to be that eye. Only I shall see things always bad for the Whigs, eh? And you would have me write such letters as you shall frame—but in my master's hand, so Louis shall be fooled—so he shall think the Virginias loyal to the English crown—so he shall no longer plan to offer the aid of France."

"Sooth," applauded Jarrat, "it couldn't be plainer. You have written to your master's hand and should know his signature. Neither De Vergennes nor Beaumarchais need be the wiser, and be sure no one in the Colonies will be."

"And if, in spite of what were written him, this foolish king should still wish to comfort?"

"Why, then the message he sends to his dear marquis will come safe to you and we shall chuckle over it in our closets. But small chance of that. The king leaned upon your master. A dozen letters of the proper complexion and he will forget he ever dreamed of fleets a-sailing westward."

"You have the true finesse, Monsieur le Capitaine," Monsieur Armand said gravely. "Permit me to congratulate you!"

"The reward is a tidy one,"—Jarrat licked the words lingeringly. "'Twould take you longer to earn a commission in your own country."

"In France, to be an officer in the army, one must prove descent from a family ennobled for at least one hundred years."

"Nor are doubloons to be plucked from the bushes by any stool-pigeon."

"It is not too much, Monsieur," the Frenchman interposed, "because you pay me for what I know of my master—habits, speech, writings, seal, all. I can write so that the king of France will never know he is dead—never, till I choose. He will send no other, no! Not till he has found it out. But when he does—what then? Shall I escape his wrath? Shall I not be an alien—an exile from my country?"

Jarrat bent toward him and spoke smilingly in the arrogance of full blood:

"Is there no compensation even for that? Look you! There be bright eyes in the middle plantation; bright eyes, and red lips and little waists and soft ways. There are slender fingers to be kissed, and these fingers oft hold purse-strings. Love is

a pretty game, and, by benefit of clergy, 'tis sometimes wed with broad plantations that bring golden guineas across the water."

He laughed at the look the other gave him. "Zooks!" he cried. "Why not? Think you the proudest of them all would not blush to be wooed by a noble, There are few 'my Lords' in the valleys."

Monsieur Armand sprang up, pushed the shutters of the window wide and leaned out, drawing a deep, long breath. Dark was come down over a moonless vast flooded with waves of bishop's-purple, to which trees lent a deeper mystery of shadow. When he turned, his face was tender, his eyes luminous.

"Virginia ladies," Jarrat continued, "are as proud as any court dames. They have the St. James sniff for the commoner. But 'tis yours to choose from them all, an you use your wit."

"Mine to choose . . " the young foreigner said as if to himself. "Mine to choose!" He looked out again into the dark, while his tempter smiled discreetly behind him. "But to win—is it always to keep, Monsieur? Some time—some time the truth must come to light. She whom I would win must love me. Would she love me then?" He spoke low, rather to the outer silence than to the other.

"Pooh! When a woman has once wed, think you it matters whether her husband be a hero or a rogue? When the game is over, the heifer is in the stall, and there's the commission to console her. Bethink, too, that the game is honored by the governor's approval. 'Tis a crown service, done at the solicitation of the royal governor. We shall presently set out for Winchester, where he lies with the troops. He shall guarantee this betimes there. What say you?" Jarrat's voice was contemptuous.

Monsieur Armand turned from the darkness, his look suddenly changed. "Yes," he said slowly, "I will do it."

His visitor rose with a covert twist to his lips. "You have decided well," he said. "You have the assurance to succeed, too! To flutter the farthingales you will need money, of course."

"Money?" the other smiled. "And me the Marquis de la Troueric? Talk of money between gentlemen? Plenty of time for that—afterward."

"Better and better," said Jarrat, the old sneer returning now that the game was won. "It bespeaks good faith. I hope you shared your master's gold with our honest skipper Elves? But you will need brave clothes. 'Tis not too much you look like a marquis at present."

Monsieur Armand laid his finger on his lip laughingly. "Ah, that is my secret. Clothes?" He crossed to the chest, unlocked it with a key from his pocket, threw it open and began with rapidity to take out coats, waistcoats, short-clothes—all of beautiful texture and heavy with lace.

"Clever robber!" said Jarrat admiringly under his breath. "A neat plucking of a useless cadaver."

The secretary laughed gaily as he took out these, with a ribbon of foreign orders, and a sword.

"Clothes?" said he again. "Let me see which I shall wear!" He was lifting the exquisite garments. "I beg Monsieur will turn his head away for one moment. *Comme ça!*"

He called to imaginary body-servants: "Alphonse! My waistcoat! The flowered one—that is right. Now, my coat. *V'là!* My sword belt, Pierre . . . So! The fairest lady in the world would be pleased with that. Now Monsieur le Capitaine!"

Jarrat, looking around, could scarce repress a cry. The gray-coated figure was no more. In its stead a vision invested in pale-rose satin, with gold chain, jeweled and smiling, stood before him.

The secretary raised the sword and gave Jarrat the fencer's salute.

"Louis Armand is gone away, Monsieur," he

said, lifting eloquent shoulders. "Henceforth behold in me, Monsieur le Marquis de la Trouerie, Noble of France, Messenger of Louis the Sixteenth!"

CHAPTER VIII

PLEDGE YOU A BRAVE MAN

On a hazy afternoon following Jarrat's stroke of diplomacy, a Berlin chaise, in lieu of the ruined chariot, bearing Mrs. Tillotson and Mistress Anne on a visit to Berkeley, drew through Ashby's Gap, along slopes spotted with clumps of lilac and golden-red.

Francis Byrd rode beside the window, for he was to join Lord Dunmore at Winchester whither the governor, in a burly fit of rage at his recalcitrant burgesses, had betaken himself to await the gathering of troops from the northern counties for the expedition against the restless Shawanee Indians on the Scioto River.

They had met but few travelers of quality so far to the westward—for the most part wandering petty chapmen or perhaps a Palatinate trader coming from Pennsylvania. These latter drove teams of six or eight horses wearing jingling bells and their huge Conestoga wagons were loaded with plow-irons and with salt, lead and gunpowder for the lower settlers.

At the notched summit Byrd rose in his stirrups. "The Shennando, Anne!" he cried.

Below, where the unbroke sunshine spun its web, lay a gold valley clasped in hills. The near mountain walls stood all matted with burnished leaves of wild ivy and bloom of chamoedaphne, its white cup-shapes stained with purplish red. In the wooded bottom the river shivered with the tumbling foam of steep torrents and went slipping soapily over ledges and between wild acres of mottled sycamore, of drooped willow and of birch. The sun, as they rode, became dull saffron-gold between the overlapped wedges of crimsoning hills.

"Poor dear!" sighed Anne, as an extra heavy jolt brought lamentation from her nerve-racked companion. "We shall soon be there, aunt Mildred; Winchester is just beyond the next forest."

"It's been just beyond the next forest for three hours," moaned the lady. "The colonel really must have new springs put to the chaise. This road is barbarous!"

"There is Winchester," Anne exclaimed, joyfully. "I see the flag on the fort."

This, a great square fortification with four bastions—the stockade built by Colonel Washington before the reduction of Duquesne—was gone much to ruin. It sat on the town's edge with generous

barracks rearing above the walls and soldiery grouped before the entrance. Here Byrd left them to report his arrival, and the two ladies rode to the town ordinary.

They descended to find the long parlor thickly set with guests and passed quickly through the hall to the inn-yard, waiting disposition of their luggage.

"The place is overfull it seems," Mrs. Tillotson said to the landlord.

"Oons!" he answered. "There are a plenty of beds, though nigh all my tankards are kept well in use. 'Tis the soldiery at the fort draws them—a good thing for the King's Arms. The Indians may go a-scalping as oft as they will."

"They are all king's men within?" asked Anne.

"Aye—a proof of my loyalty. These be times," he added, scratching his grizzle head as he went in, "when 'tis hard to choose betwixt old and new things, with the Whigs so hot. As for me, though, methinks the old will outlast my time."

"Aunt Mildred," called Anne, delightedly, "look! There is my Lord Fairfax's chariot!"

It stood under the wide shed, huge and ungainly. Anne went to it and patted the dark leather and laid her young cheek against the purple cushions.

"He is here, then," she cried; "I wonder if we

could see him." Drawing Mrs. Tillotson after her, she passed to the wide low window and peered within. It was flung half open and through it came glassy tinkles and a babble of talk.

Colonial costumes were sown through the long room and here and there were royal uniforms, flagrantly crimson. Cocked hats and great-coats lay about on the chairs and riding-whips were scattered on the tables.

Opposite them, against the farther wall, Burnaby Rolph of Westham sat squat in his oak chair where the candles glinted on his gold lace, stirring with his dress-sword a punch of Jamaica rum in a great bowl. Beside him, his arm flung carelessly back, lounged Captain Foy. Now the spirit was in his mottled, sensual face, and it seemed to cloak a devil in scarlet.

The girl shrank back instinctively, and held her aunt's arm more closely. Then she turned her eyes over the assembly.

"Mistress Anne!" exclaimed a voice behind her.

"Oh," she cried, turning, "Mr. Henry! How good it is to see you."

He took her hand and bowed to Mrs. Tillotson.

"It seems as if we had not seen you for a year," Anne continued, looking up into his sallow face and

then, with a hint of approval, at his dark wig and suit of minister's gray.

He saw her glance and smiled a little quizzically. "I am being fast spoiled," he said. "I have a plenty of coats good enough for me, yet once I go to the Congress I must get a new one to please the eye of other folk. I am on my way back from Philadelphia now."

"Are you lodged at the King's Arms?" asked the elder lady.

"At the Three Rams. Methinks the royal tang here about is a bit strong for me. I have a scent for it like a beagle for a porcupine."

"Lord Fairfax is here," said Anne, "but he has not yet seen us. We shall surprise him." She clapped her hands together softly. "I wonder how he will look! We were playing eaves-dropper just now, aunt Mildred and I, only to steal a view of him. Is it very dreadful? Come with us and look."

"I shall leave her to you, Mr. Henry," said Mrs. Tillotson. "The chests are in, so be not long, Anne; I shall wait in our chamber."

As they crossed to the window, Anne stopped and looked at him questioningly:

"What of the Congress?" she asked. Her voice was sharp and eager.

He shook his head a little sadly, his brows together over his deep-sunk eyes. "'Tis not the time yet. The Assembly is too young. They fear to take a step in the dark. It is the blind leading the blind," he said, a little bitterly. "There is no open eye. Stay—there is one. He offered them a thousand men-at-arms."

"Colonel Washington!" she said under her breath.

"Aye, Colonel Washington. The best soldier in America to-day. The only one who *sees!* For the others, it is temporize—temporize—wait the king's better humor—Parson Duché, the rankest Tory of them all, opening the session with prayer!

"Why, a Philadelphia delegate named Galloway spoke for a new plan of reconciliation, with close allegiance, an American Legislature and a president-general appointed by the king. It came nigh to stampeding the whole Convention. They see only war and the ravage of our towns—not one rood beyond that. They see not that the time and people are ripe for it. They see not that such a war can not be fought alone—that we shall, we must have help from Europe! That we must win!

"Oh," he said with sudden passion, his eyes burning like coals, "of such stuff is our Congress made! A multitude of counsellors and no leader. The sacrifice laid waiting, but no fire!"

Anne came closer to him, her fine face flashing.

"But this is not the last time," she said. "The Congress will meet again. When it does, Virginia should lead them. The Colonies must look to us, if it comes to worst. You say we have the best soldier. So shall we have the best regiments. Virginia, alone of all the rest, was settled by a single people. 'Tis held by gentlemen, and gentlemen fight best!" She put out her hand and laid it on his arm. "You can be the leader," she said. "You can be the fire!"

Thereafter neither spoke for a moment. From the stables a horse whinnied softly and a gust of laughter and the sound of a falling ale-pot came from the crowded parlor.

Then they moved forward and stood by the open window.

"I see Lord Fairfax," whispered Anne. "There by the door."

The old nobleman whom her smiling eyes sought out, sat quietly apart, his sword across his knees, with his body-servant standing behind him. His near-sighted glances, sent squinting, searched the assembly with a lurking distrust. They were king's men, truly, but not gentle like those of his own time. He turned his face toward Foy, as the

latter, pounding the table with his sword, suddenly spoke up loudly:

"I am just come from Philadelphia, gentlemen, where the ragamuffin Congress sits, and may I be flayed if I ever saw a finer lot of noodle-heads! Our Virginian cocks-o'-the-walk were all there, slimy from their hell-broth of treason at Williamsburg. 'Od's heart! It sickens to the marrow of the bones to see that lout Patrick Henry strut about in Quaker-dom."

Anne flinched as if she had been stung, and seized Henry's wrist. "Oh!" she said under her breath. "Come away! 'Tis shameful!"

"No, let us hear it," he answered. "Think you I am not used to such as that?" His voice trailed a slender line of infinite scorn. "Look!"

For more than one of those there had got up and were going out at this. Even among those who sided with the king, there were many who had spoken open disapproval of the Stamp Act days, and loved Henry for that, if for naught else.

Foy saw it. "Aye, let them go—let them go!" he sneered. "'Tis time folk knew where loyalty lay, as they know with you and me, my Lord."

A slow contempt went over that rugged old face. The baron had small love for this coupling. He

despised the blackguard confidant of Governor Dunmore too heartily to bandy talk with him.

Foy filled his glass. "'Tis said in Philadelphia," he resumed, "that one of our Virginians got on his hind legs and told them he wished to God he could fight it out single-handed with George. What think you of that, Rolph?"

Lord Fairfax had deliberately turned his back upon Foy, but he shifted in his seat now at the answer of one of the quality.

Burnaby Rolph, Foy's companion of the gold-lace, already heavy with the punch and rocking tipsily in his chair, lifted his head and laughed drunkenly.

"Sooth," he hiccoughed. "The same one offered to enlist a thousand men at his own expense and march them to relieve Boston."

Anne's face went colorless and her fingers clasped Henry's arm with a force that made him wince. "Cruel! Cruel!" she said, for the old baron broke in, stammering with choler:

"The infernal rebel!" he cried, trembling. "Is it gone so far then? Do they flout their king to his face?"

The buzz in the room ceased, and all eyes looked at the tawny old nobleman, his features working

with wrath. Henry's fingers were tight-closed and Anne's white teeth bit her under lip till a spot of blood came upon it.

All in that room knew the old man; many loved him; not a few held lease upon his land. He was one of the last brave barons who bore his name; for the most part, whether crusaders or poets, men gentle, reckless and mindful of God; men who lived cleanly lives, and died commending their souls to Jesus and bequeathing torches and sheep for their funerals. He was a man every inch of him! He blamed the king's ministers, but he loved the king.

At the leer Foy gave him, some half rose angrily, but others, of the lower sort, scenting what was coming, slyly winked and smiled behind their palms.

"One could scarce be too severe with such a bloody knave, my Lord?"

"He should rot in Tyburn!" blazed the old man.

"Swelp me!" cried Foy, with a coarse laugh, "and who, gentlemen, think you was this hangman's cur, this dirty factious scoundrel? Why, Colonel Washington, i' faith,—turn-coat since the French war!"

There were murmurs at this from all sides, even from these Tories—at the trap that had been set—at the wanton affront to a friendship that had been well known throughout the Colony, since the days

when Lawrence Washington first brought sweet Anne Fairfax from Belvoir to Mt. Vernon.

"Hound!" ground Henry between his teeth. A cold hand seemed pressed upon Anne's heart.

The stanch old loyalist's face had turned a gray-white. He half choked and his hand went fumbling to the lace at his throat. He was silent for a moment, his great brows together, his fingers on the arm of the chair clasping and unclasping, while Foy sneered audibly in the quiet.

"Not . . . George!" he faltered at length. Something almost like a dry sob escaped him. He seemed not to see the sneering face before him, now searching about for applause. He turned to the company with a gesture appealing and pathetic.

"Why, gentlemen," he said, "—why, I've known him since he was sixteen! I remember in forty-eight when he was a ruddy-faced boy and ran my lines for me! The Whigs have misled him, maybe, but he could not take up arms against—his king!"

There was a little stir in the place—a sort of waiting silence. Then a young man arose in the back part of the room and bowed gracefully. It was Monsieur Armand, and he held a slender-stemmed glass which he had filled.

"Messieurs," he said, simply, "I am not of your

country, nor am I of the allegiance of your king. My country is one far away—and it is one that has learned of war to love a soldier and a brave man."

As he spoke, Henry's face lighted with a great flash of surprise and pleasure. He did not see the white and red changing in his companion's cheek, did not note her uneven breath, nor the wondrous beauty that came, softly curtsying, in her eyes.

The voice went on:

"But we of my country know one American, so well—we know him because it is against our own arms that he has fought—before Duquesne. Messieurs, I pledge you a brave man. Colonel George Washington!"

Armand lifted his glass gravely as he finished, and drank, and a little hushed cheer ran around the room. One could not have told from the speaker's face that he knew he had drunk alone. My Lord Fairfax had no glass, but he rose in his seat and bowed to him.

The toast drunk, Armand set down the glass with a clash onto the table. His face became all at once set and cold, and he stood very straight.

"One thing more, Messieurs," he said, "we know in my country. We know the courtesy. Our postilions know what is due to the gentleman of birth. And thus—"

He turned sharply upon Foy.

"I teach it to you—you dog of the kennel!"

With this he flung the glass full into his face.

So unexpected had been the action that Anne gave a little scream, unnoted in the stir across the sill, and Henry let out a great "By God!" of admiration.

Foy's countenance turned a devil's, and his sword was out before he got up.

Armand bowed to Lord Fairfax and then to Foy. "Monsieur," he asked the latter, "is the affront to your liking?"

"'Sdeath and wounds!" raved Foy, in a fury. "We need go no farther than here to settle this! I killed a man at Minden for less."

The old baron got up, with the aid of his negro body-servant, breathing heavily. "Sirs!" he protested. "Let there be no blood-shed, I beg of you!"

"My Lord!" Armand's voice was quiet and contained, and it was all he said. Lord Fairfax stopped short, looked at him a moment, swallowed and stood still.

Rolph came lurching forward, his shifty eyes sobered by the outcome. "Gentlemen," he cried, "clear the room and send the servants away. We shall need to confer."

The baron crossed the room at this and held out

his hand. "I beg of you," he said, "to honor me by your presence at Greenway Court to-morrow."

"I thank you, my Lord," said Armand.

Then the old man, with his head up, erect and leaning on his servant's arm, passed out to his chariot. He knew very well that Foy was reputed to be the best swordsman in the Colonies.

"Have you a friend who will serve?" asked Rolph. Armand shook his head.

"Aye," said Henry fiercely, and swinging his long legs over the sill strode into the room. "If you will allow me, sir!"

Anne waited to hear no more, but ran back through the court-yard to the door. Her eyes, blinded by tears, scarce saw the great, gaunt figure till she felt his hand upon her hair.

"You here, my dear, in Winchester?" he said gaily. "You must ride to Greenway Court. We shall be blithe for you! I have just invited a guest for to-morrow."

Looking up, as she held his hand, Anne saw two drops—little shining miniatures of his big heart—roll down his cheeks.

CHAPTER IX

A GLIMPSE OF HEARTS

"And you will not stay?"

"I can not, Mademoiselle."

They stood a little way from the inn porch, between low box-rows, and the young Frenchman's eyes looked back the stenciled moonlight.

"Yet," Anne continued, "last time we met, Monsieur, I should not have deemed it too much to ask of you. There are those of your sex who would not scorn the tedium of an evening with me. Would I had spared my invitation and my blushes!"

"Cruel! When you know I would give so much —anything, for an hour with you."

She touched his sleeve lightly. "We shall sit before the fire," she said, "and you shall tell us tales of France and of the life in your own country. 'Tis chill here."

"Mademoiselle, I can not. I have a tryst tonight."

"With beauty? Then will I not delay so gallant a cavalier."

She left him and walked toward the porch, but her steps lagged. Turning, she saw him standing still, looking after her, then came back lacing her fingers together.

"You will not stay?"

He shook his head.

"I know why you go," she said, after a moment's pause. "I heard it—I saw it."

"You saw . . ?"

"The quarrel in the parlor. I was in the courtyard by the window. I know what you would do."

He looked at her uncertainly, his eyes dark and bright.

"'Twas a craven thing," she went on, "a dastardly sneer at a brave, true-hearted gentleman. My Lord Fairfax is old; and the cowards—the pitiful cowards who knew him and have eaten at his table!—they sat and heard and tittered behind their hands! But you must not fight. You must not."

"And why not?" he asked. "An old man, a noble baited by a swine! Should not such be resented by gentlemen? And shall I, who have struck that scoundrel, refuse to meet him?"

"He has killed before," she cried. "He has the quickest rapier in Virginia! It would be murder!"

"Mademoiselle, I ask you—would you have me fear?"

"'Tis no question of courage," she went on, hurriedly. "Must not I, who saw it, know that? Only you of them all dared to resent it! Monsieur, you are brave!"

"Mademoiselle!"

"But it was in my Lord's cause and I ask it for his sake. If—if you fall, he would sorrow for it till his death. And . . and . . "

"And you?" He had bent forward eagerly. "Would *you* sorrow, Mademoiselle?"

"My Lord's grief would be mine."

The young Frenchman drew a deep breath. "That is all?" he said sadly. "I am nothing but a shadow—a passing stranger, whose coming or going can not make your heart beat one bit faster or more slow? Because our ways have crossed but once, shall you tell me I can not know your heart? We are like stars, Mademoiselle, we human ones, little stars wandering in a vault of blue; when one star has found its mate, about which God has made it to revolve, shall the star refuse to obey because it has never known that star before? Have I found the one woman in the world for me, and she does not see the divine in it?"

Somewhere, far away, a whippoorwill began to call—a liquid gurgle through the clasping dark.

There came the stamping of horses and a whinny from the stables.

"Tell me, am I no more to you than that stranger passing by?"

Anne's voice held a tremor, but she spoke earnestly and softly: "You are more than that. You are one who once guarded me from danger—one whom I have this evening seen do a gentle deed that I shall remember always."

"Ah, it was nothing," he answered. "Was it more than any gentleman might do? They were not gentlemen there! But I would be so proud of it, Mademoiselle, if it made you care ever so slightly, as I have said! If it made you think of me not as a stranger, but as suddenly little nearer, a little closer than all else besides. Do you remember what I told you that day as we rode in the wood? That a man has a want for two things, a cause to fight for and . . some one to wait for him? It is near the time now and I must go, Mademoiselle, out into the moonlight. I should go joyful if you but told me that last want was mine! You—you can not give me that?"

Anne did not answer, but she was trembling with a new sense of intoxication.

"I ask you to give me a token, something to

carry with me as I ride, to keep the memory of always, to—"

"Monsieur!"

"I love you!"

"No, no," she cried, "I can not listen. I—"

"I love you!"

"Stop!"

"Once to touch your lips—"

He was leaning near her, so near she could feel his breath warm upon her cheek. In a sudden surge of revolt, she thrust out her arm as if to further the distance between them.

"No!" she cried. "No! How dare you ask me that? How dare you?"

"Ah, Mademoiselle!"

"Count you me so cheap?" she asked, turning half way; but she did not hasten. He dropped on one knee and lifted the hem of her skirt to his lips.

She let her hand fall upon his head with a fluttering gesture. Then, as he started up with a joyful exclamation, she ran back toward the porch.

Standing with bared head in the moonlight, he saw her pause on the threshold—saw the heavy door close behind her.

"You damned clod!" bubbled a furious voice behind him.

The young man turned composedly as the figure came out of the darkness of the highroad behind him.

"Ah, my Jarrat," he said, "is it you, then?"

"Look you!" Jarrat's voice was hoarse with passion. "There are some things that are denied you. This is one. Be warned."

"Warned? And by you?" laughed the other. "You lay a law for me? Wherefore?"

"Our compact—"

"And do I not hold to it, Monsieur? Did you not tell me to search out the bright eyes and red lips? Did you not say to me that love was fair in the middle plantation? Did you not whisper of proud ladies waiting to be kissed?"

Jarrat burst into a laugh:

"You! Why, you pitiful fool! So this is the why of such brave daring! Insults, forsooth, and duels with gentlemen! A fine nobleman it is, to be sure. Think you the toast of Virginia is to be charmed by your tinsel swash-buckling? Think you that Mistress Tillotson would lower her eyes to you?"

"She has already lowered her eyes to me, Monsieur."

"I tell you I will have you keep your clerk's face elsewhere!"

"Clerk?" repeated the young man. "No, no. Not a clerk; a nobleman, a marquis—one of the high-blood—a title guaranteed me this morning by my Lord the Earl of Dunmore."

"So that is it," jeered the other fiercely. "You think to wed a lady by this brave masquerade? You dream . . "

"Not by this masquerade—no," said the Frenchman, a brightening stain coming to his face. "By only my heart. By only what it holds, Monsieur. I said she had already lowered her eyes to me. Yes, —the fairest lady in Virginia—and still she does not guess of our plan and of my bargain this morning with his Excellency! Ah, such happiness! I did not even dream it would be so—that she would regard me, me just as I am. When his Excellency has returned—when I am a nobleman—I shall have this to remember—that it was so. That when she first gave me her hand to kiss, it was to me, just to Monsieur Armand—not to the marquis which I shall become."

"A title," prompted Jarrat, "good only so long as I please."

"You will not tell her otherwise. No. Because you wish me to carry out this purpose—this pretty play the plan of which has so joyed the noble earl in the fort yonder and made him smile upon you

and swear you were fit for a cardinal. You would not cloud this beaming favor of his with early failure. No, you will tell no one. A man serves either love or ambition, and your ambition is master. And I? I am not worthy to kiss her hand. No one on earth, rich or proud as he may be, could think himself that. But I could offer her more than you, for if I had the whole world, I would give it all—wealth, name, ambition,—just to be but a vagabond on the street with her! No, you will not tell her, Monsieur, that I am not what I may come to seem. You will not tell her."

Jarrat's face purpled.

"Beware, you spawn!" he said in a choked voice. "On other points you are free, while you serve in this. But go not far along the way you have chosen —with her. She is not for such as you."

"She is for whom she loves," answered the young Frenchman.

The clatter of horses sounded and the lank figure of Henry came from the stable yard, leading two mounts.

As the pair took saddle and rode away, Jarrat stood looking after them down the high-road.

"So the lady has lowered her eyes to you!" he scoffed, with a dark smile on his arrogant lips.

"And I dare not spoil your gay masquerade? I wouldn't give a pistole for your chances with Foy. He will end you as he would undo an oyster. You made a mistake, my new-laid marquis, in soaring so high, and a worse one in bragging of it. But for that touching scene in the yard I had stopped that blundering idiot, but now he may spit you and welcome!"

The rattle of departing hoofs had scarce died away when Anne crept softly down the stair of the inn. She had donned a long cloak, and from under the edge of its hood, drawn over her hair, her blue eyes looked out with a feverish brightness.

The hall was lighted with a great lantern whose yellow flood added to the flower-white pallor of her countenance. The clock was striking ten. The soldiers had sought the fort to gain early rest and the townfolk were gone home. The long parlor was still and dark. Through the open door Anne could see the litter of tankards and pipes, and a lean dog stretched with black muzzle laid to the threshold, asleep.

She slipped through the door and to the high-road, and then, with tremulous fits of fear at the shadows, ran at her best pace toward the fort. It was a good half-mile, and she reached it out of

breath. A sentry at the gate stopped her, and to him she said she wished to see the governor on important business.

"I know not if he will see you," he objected doubtfully. "It is late and the march is to begin at sun-up."

"But he must see me," she told him. "Tell him he must!"

He left her for a moment, then, returning, led her across a court of hard-beaten earth into a log-building containing a single room. At the far end was a table, strewn with papers and maps. A sword-rack was nailed to the wall.

In an arm-chair before the table, his plumed hat and sword tossed across it, sat the governor, heavy, coarse-featured, with reddish, muddy-skinned complexion under a black curled wig. He was pig-necked and his eyes were bloodshot.

She came into the center of the room and curtsied slowly while the earl rose clumsily, his red eyes flaming over her lithe, young beauty, and sat down again, tilting back his chair.

"Your Excellency," she began, "will pardon this intrusion, and my haste. A duel is to be fought this night on Loudon Field, and I—I appeal to you to prevent it."

"A duel?" The earl bent his bulky neck. "I'

faith, this is not the court at Williamsburg. I have weightier red-skin matters at present to fill my time. But 'tis truly a desperate encounter to cause such a pretty interest from Mistress Tillotson. And what fight they over, pray? I warrant me they have seen your eyes—eh?"

"At the King's Arms to-night," she said flushing, "an affront was offered to a gentleman who was absent."

"Who was this gentleman?"

"Colonel Washington."

"The Mt. Vernon farmer whom the rebels bespeak to drill their hinds. Humph! And whose was the affront, eh?"

"Your Excellency's aide, Captain Foy."

The governor slapped the table, highly amused.

"'Twas Foy? 'Od's fish, but he has a high stomach. He carries a pretty point, though, and has used it, too. He can take care of himself. And why think you I should trouble myself over such playful blood-lettings, Mistress? Soldiering makes one not so squeamish. Haith, but I have had affairs in my day. When I was a braw young blade—aye, and there were pretty eyes went red then, too," he added with a boisterous laugh.

Anne's fingers quivered with resentment and storm came to her eyes.

"Your Excellency," she cried, "the thing was but a trick to wound and flout a loyal-hearted gentleman!"

"Ah, indeed? And who this time?"

"My Lord Fairfax."

The earl chuckled in his chair. "So the baron took up for his farmer-friend, eh?" he asked, shaking his sides. "I scarce assume that Foy is going to fight the old man?"

Anne had drawn herself up, her face pale with this added humiliation. She replied with dignity:

"No, your Excellency. The affront was answered by a French gentleman named Armand."

At the name, the governor dropped his feet shuffling, and a quick gleam darted across his florid face.

"Armand!" he cried. "The devil,—eh? Foy to fight him?" He struck the bell for the orderly as he spoke.

"It shall be stopped," he went on. "An affront to Lord Fairfax, you say—a king's man, aye, and a loyal. Loudon Field is it? Foy shall be disciplined, the rascal! I thank you, Mistress, for this information. I shall send at once and put a stop to the meeting."

He was leading her to the door as he spoke, not

waiting her thanks, and as she went out she heard him rumbling angry instructions to his orderly.

Before she had gone from view of the fort gate, four mounted men poured out and clattered down the high-road at a planter's pace.

Later, in her own chamber, Anne opened her window, and, leaning far out on the ledge, gazed into the night. The wind that whispers so softly of a Southern night moved the loose, white folds of her gown. The air was a fragrant film of misty violet hiding in its trailing skirts purpling shadows, where black cedars slept against the tranquil sky. The moon was marvelous; near the horizon, awed by the greater glory, tiny stars shone like green-gilt coals.

"'Like little stars,'" she murmured, "'wandering in the blue.'" Then, after a pause, "'a little nearer, a little closer than all else besides.'"

CHAPTER X

NIGHT AT GREENWAY COURT

The spot selected for the meeting was not nearby, since Virginia's earl governor had forbidden encounters within a ten-mile of a military camp. It lay on the Alexandria side, lower down in the valley, nearer to the Shennando and distant from the high-road,—more than an hour's ride under the stars, where in a tangle of twisted fir trees and hazel bushes, was a sandy clearing of some acres, covered sparsely with reddening fern. Foy rode thither with his seconds, Rolph and a lieutenant in the royal forces.

"I like not these night affairs," spoke the lieutenant. "Dew is slippery and the light deceives. I have known of accidents."

Foy cut in with a laugh of contempt. "'Twill be an accident i' faith," he said, "if I send not his soul a-scurry to hell for that glass!"

"I mind me that fight at Minden," said the lieutenant, musingly "'Twas no white night such as

this, but black as the Earl of Hell's riding-boots. Roots and slimy grass and . . ."

Foy cursed him with his hand shaking on his rein. "Let that alone for now," he snarled. "They lied an they said he slipped. They lied! 'Twas fair, I tell you."

"Aye," said the other, surprised. "'Twas a fair thrust. None doubted it."

"Where are your wits?" said Rolph, reining close. "Know you no better topic? When you have triced the young upstart, Foy, we shall have a toddy to-night. This air has an ague."

A lantern had been set at the by-road, and at this Henry and Armand turned into the open space. The curving road on the higher Blue Ridge slope had been delicately grayed with a gossamer mist, creeping up from the late downs; here it had risen thicker, curdling more deeply against the ground and sopping the air with the smell of wet beech bark. With the sailing moon above, it was like going in some murky, dull-toned world where near things were shadowy and far vanished into opaque whiteness.

The other party was in waiting, the horses, in charge of a groom, tethered near-by, under clusters of black-scarred, white-stemmed birches, which stirred dimly as if afraid. Through their moving

branches fitful flashes of fog-mixed moonlight filtered whitely on Foy, striding up and down, slashing off golden-rod heads with his sword, and listening to the rustle of late rabbits, scurrying.

"Gentlemen," said Henry gravely, "know you no means by which this meeting may be avoided?"

"The young cock's crowing less loudly, eh?" Foy turned to his seconds with a rolling laugh.

A quick word of anger was on Armand's lips as he faced Henry, which died as Burnaby spoke:

"Let him to his knees and ask Captain Foy to use his riding whip instead of his sword."

The Frenchman's laugh rang out clearly and loud. "I have seen Monsieur le Capitaine ride. If he uses his sword as poorly as his whip—"

"Damnation!" said Foy. "Measure those swords, Rolph, and be quick about it."

Henry held Armand's coat and waistcoat after he had stripped them off, and stood slight and young, in his shirt. He looked at him with rising pity. All Virginia knew of Foy's sword-skill. He had a black record in the army of Duke Ferdinand of Brunswick, and these tales had been whispered wide in Williamsburg. There he had come to no open quarrel as yet and was made a boon companion by such pot-tipsters as Burnaby Rolph and lesser toad-eaters like young Brooke. But the

better class gave him a cold shoulder as unworthy to mix with gentlemen of character and would have needed little to have named him to his face for a sneaking whelp that smelled strong of the hangman.

The young Frenchman took Henry's hand between both his own. "I have been so occupied these last three hours," he protested contritely. "Have I said to you that you are generous and kind to assist thus in the affair of a stranger? Have I said that I was grateful?"

"Colonel Washington," said Henry, "is my best friend. An I had been in the inn parlor, sir, I had drunk that toast with you."

The night was very still. Scarce a leaf stirred in the vagrant breeze or shivered in the haze. Only a dull humming chirr of night insects from the thicket, and drifting across this—a gold snake on a sad carpet—the rich, plaintive bubble of a whippoorwill.

"Gentlemen," cried Rolph, "is all ready?"

"Have you no command, Monsieur?" Henry asked.

The young man's eyes were soft as he shook his head. "How sweet it sings!" he said. "Listen!"

It died, and the tapping of a bell, very faint, and far and tenuous, came over the still valley. Henry knew the sound. Away to the eastward,

on a high knoll, stood a long, low structure of limestone, with a wide veranda. Perched upon its roof were two wooden belfries with alarm bells, which had been hung twenty years before, after Braddock's defeat, when the Indians turned their tomahawks against the white "chief" that dwelt there. The Indians had been driven westward long ago, but the bells still rang whenever the master, with yelping hounds or by flaring torches, came back to his lodge. At this moment, while Armand stood in the moonlight, with a naked sword in his hand, my Lord Fairfax, for whose affront he stood, was come again saddened to Greenway Court.

Foy's voice broke in, sneeringly wrathful. "Are we come to string beads—"

"En garde!" cried Armand, turning sharply, and the two blades rang together with a clash.

Foy's attack was wonderfully strong. He had the trick of carrying the head well back and resting the whole weight of his body upon the left leg —a sign of one whose learning had been without masks. The other's method was as different from that of his antagonist as night from day. He fought far forward, engaging much with the point.

A *maître d'escrime* might have seen in his action some of the freedom and directness which later

gave Bertrand, the greatest fencing-master of Europe, the surname of the "Terrible." But to the watchers, it seemed to be utterly without method—barren of rule—to be loose, uncontained. He possessed the appearance of a child at careless play with a serpent, not conscious of its sinister intention.

A pain came into Henry's dark eyes and a paler tinge to his cheeks. He groaned inwardly as Foy suddenly came at Armand, pressing him back in a furious *chassé-croissé*—first the right foot forward, then the left.

The lieutenant stood close to Henry, his lips parted, watching. "They say Foy was taught of Angelo," he whispered, "and that the pupil could best his master. Your friend is in evil case."

So indeed it seemed. Foy was a brute and he fought like one, with face distorted and breath rattling with rage. He came on with the lunge of a hunter at a boar, his blade hate-heavy, and the very fury of his rush sent the young Frenchman back to the verge of the bushes.

Armand returned with a stop-thrust, parried a lunge and answered by a *riposte*. Then, for a moment, there was nothing but the *du-tac-au-tac* of slim steel, cutting wayward blue-white flashes where the milky light caught its edge.

"End the cub, Foy," cried Rolph with an oath, "and let us to town. You could have spitted him forty times!"

"By heaven!" suddenly burst out Henry. "Bravo!"

The Frenchman's blade, beating up a *flanconnade,* had nicked a crimson gash on Foy's shoulder.

The latter, smarting from the prick, and enraged beyond measure, came on again cursing, his chin set forward from his neck and a fleck of foam on his lips.

Armand had changed his tactics. He still had the appearance of looseness and lack of close defense, but, strangely enough, Foy's point, though wielded by the redoubtable swordsman that he was, had not so much as slit a ruffle of his shirt. He was untouched, immaculate, careless and debonair.

Now he became of a sudden winged. He turned, circled, was here and there with the rapidity of an insect. The fight turned this way and that, crushed the bushes, was all over the ground. There was a maze of pricking, whirling arrows of sulphur-colored flame in the moonlight. Foy's breath was coming hoarsely in his throat like that of a strangled dog. Armand began to laugh outright as he thrust and parried.

The lieutenant wedged an exclamation amid the

flick and scrape of steel. Foy's face was become a welter of sweat and rage. This was a sort of fighting new to him. He tried every attack, every feint, *double engage, coupé*—each ineffectual. Armand, nimble, laughing, began to hum a tune as he ran.

Nothing could have been better calculated to goad his adversary to point of impotency. Already Foy had begun to cut and lunge in utter, whirling madness. Rolph no longer called to him to end the matter. All alike saw that such ending was fast coming into Armand's power alone.

Again and again Foy laid his guard open to Armand's thrust, taking no thought, but still the Frenchman withheld it. Instead, his leaping point slashed the other's coat to flapping ribbons, pricked him on the thigh, in the arm-pit, in the hand—wasp-stings that drew blood and rage, but harmed not.

At the first spurt of crimson, Rolph leaped forward, crying that it was enough, at which Armand politely lowered his blade; but Foy reviled his second with such devil's curses that he went back to his station, gritting his teeth.

The lieutenant raised his hand, withdrawing his eyes an instant from the combatants. Henry listened, and his ear caught the tattoo of hoof-beats

flinging over the road, mixed with the falling of a lash upon horses' flanks—a frenzy of impatience in the sound. As it came clearer Rolph turned his head with a quick gleam of relief.

At the same instant, Armand swerving far forward, wounded his antagonist in the right wrist, and, Foy's fingers relaxing on the hilt, with a sweeping twist sent his sword rattling a good ten feet away.

Foy was after it to snatch it up, with a snarl more like a wild beast than a man, when an officer, at a gallop, leading three soldiers, broke into the clearing and spurred fairly between.

"Stop," he shouted, out of breath. "Stop! In the governor's name!"

Armand tossed his sword to the ground.

"Hell and fury!" foamed Foy, as he sprang back, slashing at the horse's legs. "Out of the way, damn you!" The animal plunged aside, and Foy came at Armand like the madman he was.

The officer threw himself off the horse too late, as Henry rushed forward. Armand stood perfectly still, his hand pressed to his side, where a stain was spreading crimsonly among the white ruffles.

"Bear witness," Rolph said with coolness, turning to the soldiers, "that Captain Foy is not himself for liquor."

"There has been no liquor drunk lately. You meant murder!" Henry turned fiercely upon Foy who, his rage sullenly sobered, stood biting his nails.

"Enough, gentlemen," interrupted the officer. "There will be time for that. I have his Excellency's orders to bring all here in his command, to the fort. Captain Foy, Mr. Rolph, Lieutenant, I call on you to accompany me without delay to town!"

"You are hurt, Monsieur," cried Henry, throwing an arm about the young Frenchman, who staggered slightly. "Sir, you will not leave him so—bleeding—here by the road-side? Greenway Court is not far distant. In the name of humanity, I ask you to assist me to take him where he can have proper attention for his wound."

"I have imperative orders, sir. Mount, gentlemen."

"Well to leave him to the dogs!" burst forth Foy in a sudden simmer of white fury, as he turned in his saddle. "And you, you damned upstart rebel. Virginia would long have been the easier for your gibbeting!"

Their hoof-beats grew fainter, then were gone in blankness and echo, and Henry, feeling the young man's form grow suddenly limp, laid him gently down upon the turf.

The baron had driven from Winchester that night with a hurt in his gallant old breast. When he settled back in his seat his hands trembled greatly, clasped atop his sword. The huge chariot, drawn by four wild ponies that would go at any gait except trot together, swung swaying from its leathern springs, and the road seemed very long.

"Are we almost there, Joe?" he asked more than once.

And the old negro, riding behind him, would reply stoutly: "Almos' dar, Mars' Torm; almos' dar."

It was not to ancient Castle Leeds in Kent that he was going now—not to its vivid towers and russet gables—not to its romance and the mildew of its years. The clear river ran there never so clearly. It murmured never so sweetly to the terraced gardens and the hedges he had used to leap with his hunter. It was no longer for him, nor had it been for thirty years.

If illusive gleams of one old garden, dew-drenched and rose-scented, lit by no light save the flame of his great love and hers—if these had flickered sometimes over the dull drab of latter days that he had fashioned—they had made him tenderer, not colder; had made for him life's architecture not harsh of outline, nor barren of meaning, but more splendid from a thousand mullioned memories.

There had come a time, too, when his grim heart, locked so tightly, had opened to another sentiment; a youth had galloped and hunted over Truro parish, a youth with ruddy skin and keen gray eyes—bluff Captain Washington's son George—and the youth had galloped his way into it. There came the French war, and the youth was a man and a soldier. But to the old baron, president of the king's Council, loyalist of the loyal, Colonel Washington renowned for Duquesne was still a stripling, still "my boy." And this boy had chosen ways strange to the old man's comprehension—ways seized on by vulgar men to flout his stanch regard.

So to-night his heart was sore. Loneliness was come new-bittered upon him. He was riding solitary, old in years, older in sorrow, insatiably proud and lonely, to a rough hunting-lodge—his only habitation—whither in his untired youth, he had come to bury an old tired heart. The years had gone. Fame and achievement were passed by. The breezy freshness of those morning days, the clamping pulsations of hope—these were cold and dead. Only pride was left—pride of race that is noble and best—pride that does not shrivel the heart or wizen the soul. It still burned strong in the ravaged face and defied the numbing sense of age.

The fog, fold on fold, shut out the beauty of the way. Lower in the wooded valley the shadows lay very thick, like dead men strewn on a battle-field. Riding, he heard the leaves fall—like the illusions of youth, like happiness, like glory, like power

"Almost there, Joe?"

"Almos' dar, Mars' Torm; almos' dar!"

Up the craggy way a flicker of light stabbed down through the drab-lace tree traceries, and the chariot, turning in to the clearing amid clamorous dogs, woke the cloistral silence of Greenway Court. A negro came out, beat back the dogs and let down the step, and the old man descended, leaning on Joe's arm. In the moonlight, the gray limestone walls looked white and the mossed roof turned a slope of dull silver. On the low branches of the trees, turkeys dipped quick, querulous heads, quarreling on their roosts. A stately fox-hound stood blinking in the open doorway, and he stretched his great head and licked his master's hand as he entered.

From the deep room, to left of the hall, glimmer of firelight glanced from the long shining barrels on the wooden gun-racks, huddled tawny shadows in the skins stretched against the rustic walls and gilded the somber rows of rare books.

Joe brought my Lord his supper of venison and

Bordeaux, standing behind his chair till his master was done. This was not long to-night.

My Lord took up a book, but threw it down again; then he lit his pipe and sat long silent till the fire domed blackening. Joe came in, piled pine-knots on it, and went shuffling out again. The hounds yawned about the hearth or whimpered softly in their dreams.

Crackling steps roused them, and they scrambled out to bay and sniff, and yelp when the negro clubbed them back.

A heavy tread stumbled up the steps. An aged mastiff, curled under the old man's chair, hunched shoulders, growling, and the baron, sitting by the dead hearth, with the ashes fallen from his pipe, turned his head.

Henry stood on the threshold carrying Armand in his arms.

As his bearer stood, rocking, the young man stirred, opened his eyes wide on the baron and thrust down his legs. "My Lord," he cried gaily, but with weakness and husking breath, "I come early to . . keep . . my . . appointment." He took a step, and lurched forward on to the floor.

Lord Fairfax stood up like a blasted tree with two dead boughs left swinging. **"Great God! The lad. Has Foy killed him?"**

"Not yet," Henry answered. "No fault of his, my Lord."

The baron shouted for his servants and for cloths, hot water and lily-vinegar. "He must have a leech," he said.

"I will ride myself for the doctor at Ashby's Gap," Henry answered. "But I will dress the wound first." With Joe's help skins were spread on one of the couches and Armand laid thereon. Then, with a woodman's knowledge of wounds, Henry drew his knife and cut away the clothing.

"It is not mortal?" asked the old man anxiously.

"No. But 'twas a foul lunge. Think not he was the poorer swordsman. Never was such a skill seen in the Virginias as he showed this night."

"Is it so?"

"Sir, he held that rat's life on the point of his steel. I swear to you he could have run him through a score of times an he would. They stopped the duel—soldiers from the fort—and that red devil of Dunmore's attacked him when he had thrown his weapon by and was empty-handed."

"Ah!" cried the baron.

At length Henry stood up. "I am off to the Gap now. I shall not return with the doctor, since I must on to Williamsburg to-morrow. But for safety's sake I shall pray him speed."

A struggle showed in the baron's face. No one had ever gone uncheered from his door. He kept open table at the Winchester courts, fed the poorer settlers with his own produce, and would have filled the ragged hat of a beggar with guineas. One passionate hatred he had—hatred against the enemies of his king. All were alike to him, high or low. The times, growing beyond him, had put forward patriots. But, all alike, he deemed them vipers that bit the hand that fed them.

As Henry approached the door, my Lord was fidgeting in his chair. The hand was upon the latch when he could restrain himself no longer.

"Joe!" he thundered, "fetch a stirrup-cup. You may be a rebel, sir, but—damn my whips and spurs! you shall drink before you go. I could wish you were not an enemy of the king's."

"Not of the king's," said Henry, and smiled. "Not of the king's, but of the king's rule."

A gleam of fierceness, of the uncompromising principle of his life, shot from under the old man's brows. "I hold with no disloyalty."

"I hold," said Henry, in a low voice, "with my friend, Colonel Washington."

"I abet no treasons," flamed the old man.

Henry's eyes hid a sudden gleam of satiric humor.

He stretched out the glass the negro had brought him and proffered it to his host.

"I must decline," he said, "to accept hospitality from any man on earth who has aught to say against the character of Colonel Washington!"

The baron stood for a moment with his jaw dropped, then coughed. "God knows—" he said, his voice shaking like a child's, "God knows I—"

But he got no further. "My dear Lord Fairfax!" exclaimed Henry, and drank the glass at a draft.

Hour by hour my Lord sat beside Armand, now pale, now tossing in a fitful, thirsty fever. Wind came and clashed the branches outside. There were no sounds save these, the occasional baying of a hound, the soft crackle of the fire.

Looking at the younger face on the bear-skins, the old man wandered over many leagues of ocean to a mysterious land where he himself moved amid the gay throng, young like this helpless guest—quick, too, to resentment and daring, giving honor where honor was due. Now he was of the same age—at the University, one of its *jeunesse dorée;* now riding with honest Dick Steele the trooper, or dropping in for a dish of tea with Dick's pretty wife; now reading to Joe Addison a paper he had written for the Spectator; now sauntering arm-

in-arm with Lord Bolingbroke from drawing-room to rout and from rout to drum-major, dicing with his fellow-officers in the crack regiment of "The Blues," handling swords and cards and drinking wine—all this in the olden, golden days of good Queen Anne.

And with the thought of those days came a vision of a face that seemed a part of them—the face of a woman, slim-necked and lovely, high-colored and with a rare hauteur of eyes.

O memory that strikes across such voids of time! Had he forgot a line of that face? He who had seen it in sun and moon, framed in the chair-window, and against green leaves? Not he! He smelled the perfumes suddenly of flowers long withered, caught the sound of tapping scarlet heels and the frou-frou of brocades. Youth and its delusions were come upon him. The sleeping fires stirred in the ashed-gray heart, and gilded a host of memories of his younger manhood, beautiful, sad and tender, but vivid as the crimson rifts made by the crackling fire.

Softly, lest Joe should hear and come to aid him, he went across to a cabinet and took from a secret drawer an indented parchment, old and yellow. It was a marriage contract, drawn in England, and made ready for the signature and seals. The upper

margin was cut in a sinuous line—the name of the lady and the date effaced. Only the man's name was left, solitary, defiant. He laid it back after awhile and stumbled to his chair by Armand's couch.

A red core fell in the fire-place and myriad tiny spark-clusters melted up the chimney's throat. The fire sprang up, flushing, leaping, paling, casting a Rembrandt glare over the great solitary figure sitting with its Past.

Silence in the room. Over all, outside, the long benediction of moonlight and falling leaves.

CHAPTER XI

WHEN A WOMAN DREAMS

In the gray-wreathed dawn Lord Dunmore, at the head of his Virginia troops, marched off with fife and drum for Fort Pitt, and the buff and scarlet passed the King's Arms, where Anne peered from the window to see them off. In one of the scarlet groups she distinguished Francis Byrd. Drawing the curtains close under her chin, she put out a hand and waved to him, smiling, and he saluted her face with a flash of his sword and a wistful look as he rode by. Immediately behind the governor, near Jarrat, rode Foy, and a sting of resentment made her clench her hands, with the steel in her eyes.

When they had gone she crept back into the warm bed and lay smilingly thinking. She should see Armand soon again, and he should never know what she had done! So thinking, she dropped to sleep and did not wake till the sun was high.

She breakfasted with gay spirits, insisted on riding horseback, and followed by John-the-Bap-

tist, galloped off a half hour in advance of her aunt's chariot, along the way to Greenway Court. The day was cool with a tang of frost, and Anne gave the spur till the negro was hard pressed to keep her in sight. At length she halted where the road bent, to laugh when he came lumbering up and pulled his horse back on his haunches at sudden sight of her.

"Fo' Gord, Mis' Anne," he panted, all eyeballs and white teeth. "Dat's de beatenes' hoss yo' got! He fly lak er shot outer er shov'l! Yo' go dar lak dat, yo' skeer Mars' Fairfax ter fits!"

At the opening of the road which went twisting up the spur to the lodge, she dismounted and ran on afoot. Save for the tumbling dogs, the sparse clearing was silent and the hospitable door stood wide.

She entered. No one was in the hall, and her feet fell noiselessly in the thick buffalo-robe on the floor. Overhead showed black rafters squared with sun. Hats and great-coats were hung on a huge pair of antlers, and a muddy riding-whip was stuck into a Chippendale vase in the corner. Over all lay that indefinable lack which the absence of woman gives to a habitation, be it miner's hut or bishop's palace.

She pushed open the door of the living-room and then stopped, startled.

She saw a settle, strewn with skins, a wave of curling brown hair pillowed on it, and under this a glimpse of a pale face turned away. There was a shaded window opposite, and light came through it whitely. A hand and wrist hung over to the floor. There was something desolate in the silence, something appealing in the droop of that hand that brought a smart to Anne's eyes as she looked.

Suddenly she caught her breath, and took quick steps forward into the room, gazing searchingly at the figure on the couch—the strong hair, setting all the paleness of the face in a shadowy frame, the blue circles under the closed lids, the young mouth, the upward sweep of the rounded chin. She began to tremble exceedingly, her lips unsteady, her great blue eyes misting, her whole face caught in a quaking terror. She had gone whiter than a moon-flower.

"They were too late!" she whispered. "You fought, then! Ah, while I was so glad!"

She crouched down by the settle, her hand pressed tight against her heart, full of a joyful anguish she had never known. Something she had fought down hitherto rose in her throat and choked her at sight of this hurt, this helplessness.

At last, yielding all at once, with a little sob and a gesture of pride and longing and surrender,

she bent slowly, like a swaying lily and kissed him on the forehead.

He stirred and opened his eyes with wonder in them to see her face so near.

"Mademoiselle!"

"You have been wounded!" she breathed.

He tried to rise, and failing, smiled at her. "It is a little thing. The doctor has told me that. And you care! Then it is nothing—less than nothing."

"You make light of it."

He lifted himself on one elbow and stretched out an uncertain hand toward her. "Mademoiselle," he said, "was I dreaming when you came, or did —or did—"

She was on her feet now and her eyes turned their gaze away.

"No, no," she answered, "you were asleep."

"As I opened my eyes just now it seemed—as if you had—kissed me on the forehead. Was that a dream, Mademoiselle?"

"It was a dream," she said hurriedly, her voice wavering.

"You kissed me!" Joy was in his look.

"No!"

"Ah, Mademoiselle!" He fell back on the skins.

With suddenly rosying cheeks, she ran toward the

door to meet the old baron entering from the hall.

That was an autumn when Lord Fairfax felt the freshening of youth. The October came like a painted Eden, wherein the gold-raftered forests around Greenway Court glowed and reddened to sunsets that opened like hearts of cleft pomegranates and faded into vast lilac-tinted glooms, where the songs of whippoorwills throbbed like silver hearts of sound, and from which the mist-veined dusk lifted like incense.

Twice in the weeks while Armand bettered, Anne and Mrs. Tillotson drove down from Berkeley, where they visited, and at such times the baron's table sighed with all the provender of the valley. Anne's moods on these rare days were strange—full of glow, of impatience, of eager brilliancy, of stimulating, unmanageable ways, of audacities that went flashing through her personality like forked lightning through a purple cloud.

There was at last a long November week while Anne was at Winchester, and when she and Armand, his wound healed, rode together along the valley ways. The young Frenchman still remained a guest, for the baron would hear no word of departure;

he swore he should not leave him till the season opened again at Williamsburg.

The day before their return to Gladden Hall, the ladies spent at Greenway Court. As the mild November afternoon faded, Armand and Anne sat in a rustic house, built of twisted grape-vine, set where the round spur on which the lodge was built fell steeply down. A book lay on her knee.

Far away, against the long sashes of sapphire light, the sweep of ragged Blue Ridge stood listlessly. The river bottom was a violet-gray reach of stain-soaked grasses hung with wreaths of trailing Virginia creeper drabbled in the summer's blood, or as if the peaks ran down with red wine wasting.

Anne pointed where, just below, the river wavered like a sheet of spun silver, edged with soaked velvet.

"The Indians call it 'Shennando,'" she said—"'Daughter of the Stars'."

He leaned forward and lifted the little book, its binding of parchment, pale-yellow, like antique ivory. "It is a tale of my own land," he said softly, "of Normandy, in the old days when the troubadours sang."

"I have not yet read it," she answered. "Tell me the story."

"It is of the son of a poor wood-cutter. Toiling

once by his hut in the forest, he saw by chance the daughter of a king as she rode past with her cavalcade. He brought her a cup of water, and she smiled on him. So fair she was that he loved her to desperation, and could not rest nor sleep from thinking of her face. He traveled far and came by night beneath her window and sang songs to her, songs delicate and beautiful, in phrases that only his great love had taught him, and when he sang he touched the strings of his own heart. The lady listened, and her tears fell down from the window in the palace wall. She was a great lady, and he the lowest of the land, and in the hopelessness of his passion he sang that he was a prince of a hostile country, wooing in attire of rags the darling to whose presence he might not rightly come. His were not like the songs of the gilded courtiers that flocked her father's gate. They were more noble and true, and his love climbed upon them, as if on stairs of gold, and drew her heart out to him over the sill. One night she slipped out to his arms in the darkness. Then he knelt on the yellow forest leaves and told her the truth and pleaded as excuse his great love. And he would have gone from her and left her to go back alone."

"What then?" demanded Anne.

"She took his hand and kissed him and went away with him to his hut in the forest."

Both were silent a moment.

The vivid tints in the sky were paling. The river's silver dulled to mauve. The gloom, all luminous, seemed an impatient suitor stealing amorous upon the drowsy day. The day stirred, glowed again and spread out a tawny flood, as a woman drops her hair under some golden lamp to please a lover's whim.

"Think you," he asked then, very low, "that such a love might be?"

"'Twas for love of her," she said softly.

When he spoke again she felt a thrill in his voice.

"Mademoiselle, suppose a man loves with a love that fills all the sky; that for him there was but the one woman in the world. Suppose she found that he was not what she had thought him when she first loved him—that the idol she had worshiped was just clay. If he stood mean and small before the world—before her—but still loving her, adoring her! If it were not a princess going to a hut in the forest, but a woman, prideful and . . . and ashamed! Could she still love him as before? Could she? Could she?"

Her eyes could not meet his burning ones.

"Monsieur," she said, quivering, "when a woman loves, she will forgive anything—everything in the man she loves, save . . . "

She stopped; there was a muffled sound of horse-hoofs from the climbing road.

"Save what?"

"Save lack of love for her."

The hoof-beats were coming nearer. She made a desperate effort to compose herself. He had bent toward her—so near she could smell the fragrance of hazel bushes in his hair.

"Then it would not matter—she would not care," he cried joyously. "He might be either the prince or the wood-cutter, Mademoiselle?"

The last shaft of the sunlight stumbled and tangled on her brow. Dark loomed near—only a gold brush was laid lightly upon the middle distance.

"If a woman loved and was loved so, naught else would count. Not even—even if he were despised by all the world—even—" her lips were tremulous. She felt his hand on the bench beside her suddenly touch her own.

There was a trampling behind them. Both turned to the porch, where Lord Fairfax stood leaning on Joe's arm, to welcome the two riders who had

just dismounted. The young man made an exclamation.

"Why," exclaimed Anne, "'tis the governor himself, returned from Fort Pitt."

As they approached, the girl crimsoning with the memory of her night errand to the Winchester fort, the earl was bending bulkily over the hand of Mrs. Tillotson, in the doorway.

"You honor my poor house with this visit," said the old man, beaming. "Anne, you know his Excellency."

The governor bowed to her curtsy, and set his eyes on the paler face of the figure at her side. First a low chuckle began in his throat. Then he slapped his thigh.

"So that was how the land lay!" he guffawed. "Not content with quarreling with my soldiers, eh? And incognito yet, I'll be bound!"

The baron stood staring, and Anne looked a bit frightened.

The governor reached a thick arm and prodded the young man genially in the ribs.

"Sly dog—eh?" he winked. "Tut-tut! Would you still deny us poor Virginians? Haith, then, come here! Ladies, my Lord Fairfax—it pleasures me to present to you Monsieur le Marquis de la Trouerie."

CHAPTER XII

ENTER, A POET

With Lord Dunmore's abrupt and final dissolution of the Burgesses and his departure for the frontier, the quality of Virginia had shut their Williamsburg homes and taken up again the life at their mansions scattered along the river valleys. They had gone outwardly suave and content, with a smiling and placid demeanor that might have deceived a deeper statesman than the Earl of Dunmore. At their houses they had resumed the Arcadian life of the plantation, hunting, riding, entertaining, with the same deliberateness, the same ease, the same hospitality. This life, so simple in its motives, so elaborately complex in its detail, was a duty to Virginian gentlemen.

Now, with the return of the governor to the capital laden with victories and substantial treaties, they trooped back—men of great names: Washington, Mason, Jefferson, Harrison, Cabell, stanch Whigs

all—from Mt. Vernon, from Gunston Hall, from Monticello, from Brandon, from Union Hill.

And from Belvoir, from Westover and a dozen other loyal houses went the Fairfaxes, the Byrds and the wealthy planters who shrugged their shoulders at estrangement and bowed lower than St. James' courtiers to that strangely self-willed king, George III, whose looking-glass was the House of Commons, before which he adjusted himself daily, whose religion was to please everybody—at once a gentleman and a tyrant.

Mrs. Byrd, arriving with Betsy in time to greet Francis when he returned with the troops, walking at early evening on the Bruton pave among newcome councillors and students in cap and gown, met a trio with linked arms, two of whom the matron would have passed with righteous eyebrows. One was Patrick Henry in riding dress; the other, a small dark man, was Alberti, the violin teacher.

The presence of the third, however, as it were, removed the curse from the others. Mrs. Byrd had inveighed against him often enough when in anger, but, after all, she never forgot that he was the master of Monticello and that his mother was a Randolph.

"Mr. Jefferson!" gushed the lady. "Welcome to town again." She nodded with condescension to

Henry and Alberti. "How is Monticello and the wonderful new decorations?"

Jefferson turned his gray-flecked hazel eyes on Henry with a grimace.

"Sooth," he replied, "slow enough. That is Mr. Henry's favorite gibe at my expense."

"Lord," chuckled Henry. "He was out to beat the Grand Tartar. 'Twas to have a burying-place with a Gothic temple and a roof-like lantern of Demosthenes at Athens and a park with a buck-elk and a buffalo. He was going to settle down there and become a philosopher and curse at Plato and Davy Hume. Now he has got the place, he is like the cow that swallowed the grindstone."

"Mr. Jefferson," interrogated Betsy, eagerly, "have you yet seen Williamsburg's new marquis that every one is talking of?"

"No," Jefferson replied. "A marquis? So our home beaux will have to smart themselves to hold their own. As for Henry and me, we are old married men."

"'Tis not so long ago for you, Tom," Henry reminded, "that you were a gay dog, too. Doctor Walker, your guardian away at Castle Hill, never knew the half of it! When you were at William and Mary,—'Devilsburg' he called this town then, ladies! —I remember you had a fierce flame for some 'Be-

linda' that had knit you a pair of garters. The rats ate them afterward."

Jefferson's face creased in a smile. "I was seventeen then, Mrs. Byrd. Mr. Henry should have taught me better, but his evil influence hath made me a politician, who then thought no further than a fiddle."

"And he has the fiddle yet," from Henry.

"So I hear," Mrs. Byrd said. "Does he profit by your lessons, Mr. Alberti? There are some who have it that 'God save the King' is a tune not taught in your rooms."

The Florentine whose eyes were on the tall, ivory-white spire, shrugged his shoulders at the shaft and laughed. He cared little if all Williamsburg called his lodgings a nest of insurrection.

"My old fiddle is about still," said Jefferson. "I mind when Shadwell, my father's place, was burned. I was at Richmond and one of the slaves brought me news of it. 'Were none of my books saved?' I asked him. 'No, Mars' Torm,' says he, 'but we saved de fiddle!'"

Betsy laughed. When her mother talked of Henry, the fiddle was her choicest jeer.

"Such conversation!" Mrs. Byrd said irritably, as they proceeded toward home. "Fiddles!"

"And they didn't even know the marquis was in town!" pouted Betsy. "I wonder if Anne has got back from Berkeley yet."

Henry, Jefferson and Alberti went to a narrow house in Duke of Gloucester Street, where the Florentine let them in with a key. Inside, they passed up a narrow stair to a room unconcealably bare but comfortably warmed, containing a large table littered with writing materials. This was a chamber afterward celebrated scarcely less than the Raleigh's Apollo Room, christened for that famous apartment in the Devil's Tavern on Fleet Street, London, where Shakespeare and Jonson held their bouts of wit and wine.

Here, in these troublous days when rebellion stirred underground, one might often see the faces of that coterie of young men who, holding aloof from the younger set of the tavern, formed themselves into a club whose watchword was resistance to oppression—Henry, Jefferson, George Mason, Paul Carrington, Samuel Overton, St. George Tucker. It was an active junta, and the head and front of its inspiration was Patrick Henry. Fiddle-cases and sheets of written score lay about, but they were seldom used. Those who met came to learn a sterner and more martial music.

Henry stretched himself in a chair and yawned. Jefferson stood, his hands behind him, leaning square-shouldered against the wall.

Never was there greater apparent disparity between two men. About Henry hung an atmosphere of deceptive laziness. Jefferson's homely, thin-skinned face was all alive. Henry was lithe but stooped and ungainly; Jefferson stood two inches over six feet, sinewy and straight as a ramrod. Henry was dressed carelessly in dull colors, his bottom-wig uneven; Jefferson wore a blue coat with lace and a waistcoat of crimson. His reddish chestnut hair was exactly curled. Henry had spoken with a drawl; Jefferson's every word was clear-cut, incisive and full of assurance.

The disparity carried further: Henry's horse went burred; Jefferson, before his daily mount, tested his hunter's velvet grooming with a white silk kerchief. Henry hated minutiae; Jefferson had down in his books the two pennies paid for a shoestring or the sou tossed into a beggar's hat in Paris. Jefferson was college-bred; Henry a student of the out-of-doors. Jefferson was the learned lawyer, Henry the advocate. Jefferson lived by facts; Henry was a dreamer.

Yet now, as they waited, Jefferson looked at Henry; Henry at the fire.

Alberti lit the candles, then went out, closing the door, followed by Jefferson's eyes.

Henry waited until his retreating footsteps had died down the hall; then he turned to Jefferson with a flash in his cavernous gray eyes. The flippancy and careless demeanor were gone. His saturnine visage had become suddenly transformed.

"All goes well, Tom," he said.

"The militia?"

"Ready, all of them. I called the men of Hanover to meet me at Smith's Tavern, and I spoke to them. There was no shilly-shallying—you should have heard them cheer! Would the king could have heard them—aye, and Lord North! Tom, we enlisted the first independent military company in Virginia! No allegiance holds; they are sworn to execute all orders from the Committee of their county. What news from the lower country? Has their blood all been sucked out by the mosquitoes?"

Jefferson smiled. "The Committees of Safety are forming without noise. In two months there will be six thousand men enrolled. The Committees of Correspondence are under way."

"Good!" cried Henry. "Now for the best of all. I have seen General Lee and Major Gates of Berkeley, and both favor the movement. And, Tom—Colonel

Washington has consented to review our companies and to take command!"

He was silent a moment, his eyes sparkling, his fingers rustling the papers on the table.

"'Tis the lull before the storm," he said, finally. "Let us work while we may, for it must burst soon!"

At the other end of the town, a half mile from where Henry and Jefferson sat in consultation over lists of militia from the counties, Master Christopher Hooke stood outside of his Williamsburg tavern, which held out upon it the sign of the college, and watched the evening stars crowding into the violet sky.

Many a hogshead of best Virginia leaf came yearly from up-river plantations with the younger sons of broad acres and manorial homes to William and Mary College, and these younger sons kept Master Hooke's ire florid and his purse content.

The tavern was on the high-road near the common, and its host, a severe, stocky man with mild-lidded eyes, took his long pipe from his mouth and bowed to Francis Byrd as the latter, tanned from his campaigning, turned in from Duke of Gloucester Street, minded for an hour of old-time enjoyment

whose peculiar flavor he had sighed for a score of times while away.

The host smirked at a renewal of old acquaintance.

"Good evening, your Honor," he said obsequiously, as befitted a scion of Westover. "I am blithe to see you again. There are some few of your age and quality within, though I wager," he added shrewdly, "they are less sober than you by now. The young gentlemen are prickly these days—'tis that young Master Freneau, I warrant, sets them so. Know you him?"

"No," said Byrd.

"He was a student in New Jersey, I hear," continued Master Hooke, his mild eyes turning a-twinkle, "but lately he is come to take lectures at the college here. He writes some pretty verses not good for loyal ears to hear. Lard, how the tutors love him! Theology has gone sparking with his cockle-head. They say Dunmore would throttle him an he dared, as Pharaoh's midwives throttled the infant Hebrews. In sooth, the rogue has made the college a pepper-pot, till it would pleasure my young masters well to behead King George on the campus each evening. You mind when the news came that the merchants of New York had broke through the

resolves not to import. The collegiates donned their gowns and made a procession. 'Twas as solemn as a burial. They burned the letter which asked the merchants of Philadelphia to open port, and set a black to keep the great bell tolling from noon till midnight. Had Master Freneau been here then, I doubt they had burned down the palace!"

Byrd had paused long enough to catch a muffled sound of conviviality from within. Now he opened the door and followed the long hall to where a crack of light above the sill pointed the tap-room. The dark had blinded him and when he entered he stood dazed by the intrusive glare of candle light, rubbing his eyes, which smarted sorely from the blue and white tobacco-smoke that ringed the air with floating silver haloes.

As he stood, a thick voice came out of the far haze, calling in no certain accent for more ale, and if not, for one Jacob, a drawer, who should set forth the reason why in classical Latin to be passed upon in due examination. The ale should have been forthcoming, for a lusty chorus straightway began of which he could make out but little save the stave:

"But since he is pleased to proclaim us his foes,
What the devil care we where the devil he goes?"

roared out with sturdy thumpings upon the oak, and in voices of all manner of cadences.

There opened a wide space, consisting of two rooms, one cut into another through a spacious doorway. It was from the inner room that the din proceeded, where was a group of roisterers of about a score of years, gathered around a board littered with pewter pots and broken "councillors."

Three oak tables sprawled along the walls of the inner room. At the farthest sat two young men, of dress very genteel; their square-topped caps were flung on to the window seat. One of the couple, it appeared, had just received his allowance and the twain were expending it on a dinner into which, though the game-pie was scarce yet opened, had already entered more of the tavern's liquor than was good for either of them.

Byrd's eyes passed over these and fixed themselves upon a man sitting with back to the door, chin in hand, scowling at the pair. He wore a dusty riding-cloak and high military boots with spurs.

As the door swung he turned suddenly, and Byrd recognized Captain Foy.

The newcomer sat down at the remaining table, called for a flask of claret, and settled himself to await some old acquaintance while enjoying the keen

badinage and wit that flew about, mixed with sprightly nonsense and gibes of a political savor. The party in the inner room did not stint their noise. There was a toast to the tutor in mathematics, a Mr. Houston, and one to the proctor, which latter was greeted with melancholy groans and lamentations.

This had scarce lessened when the outer door opened and there entered a pale-faced youth of expression sad and studious, seeming at first glance perfectly out of character with the surroundings. He was slight almost to girlishness, his dark features sharp and finely chiseled, his long black hair falling carelessly over his forehead. His fine ruffles were of almost a foreign foppishness.

As those in the room turned, he spread his hands abroad, brought the fingers together with the thumbs upward, and, moving them with a curious motion, began to speak in a rich nasal and with exactness. Some warning it was against a play much practised by students with balls and sticks in the back campus of the college, which he assured them was low and unbecoming gentlemen and students and attended with danger to the health by sudden and alternate heats and colds.

"Gad's life!" howled one of the two over the

pasty. "'Tis old Camm himself!" and fell to slapping the table.

At close they shouted, "Freneau! Phil Freneau!" pounced upon him as a fox takes a partridge, and set him, protesting, upon a table. "A song, Phil!" they cried. "None shall sing but Phil!"

And so, sweeping his hair from his eyes with a hand on which sparkled several rings, he began:

"As Jove the Olympian (who both I and you know
Was brother to Neptune and husband to Juno),
Was lately reviewing his papers of state
He happened to light on the records of Fate.

"And first, on the top of a column he read
Of a king with a mighty soft spot in his head,
Who should join in his temper the ass and the mule,
The third of his name, and by far the worst fool."

As he sang the doggerel, he nodded his head from side to side with elaborate gestures, and his eyes, set on Foy's scarlet uniform, sparkled viciously. The latter flounced in his chair and his teeth came together in an angry snip, seeing which Byrd looked vastly delighted.

The youth on the table grinned amiably at his comrades and continued:

"Then turning to Vulcan, his master of thunder,
He said, 'My dear Vulcan, I pray you go yonder.
Now as you're a blacksmith and lusty stout ham-
eater,
You must make me a globe of a shorter diameter.'

"Old Vulcan complied (we've no reason to doubt it),
So he put on his apron and went strait about it—
Made center, and circles as round as a pan-cake,
And here the Pacific, and here the Atlantic."

He brought each stanza out in a shrill hooting falsetto, and his hearers, flocking about, beat pewter on tables with a delight which left no question of their Whig proclivities. As for Byrd, he looked at the captain and rejoiced to see the flush that was creeping up his cheek.

"In the African clime (where the cocoanut tree
grows)
He laid down the desarts and even the negroes,
The shores by the waves of four oceans embraced,
And elephants strolling about in the waste.

"Adjacent to Europe he struck up an island,
One part of it low, but the other was high land,
With many a comical creature upon it,
And one wore a hat and another a bonnet.

"These poor little creatures were all in a flame
To the lands of America urging their claim,
Still biting, or stinging or spreading their sails;
(For Vulcan had formed them with stings in their tails.)"

Here Foy flirted his red-coat about with a snarl at them for a drunken crew of jingle-brains, and his hand went to his sword. The singer paused.

"Shall I cease, gentlemen?" he inquired with suave gravity. "I would not tread upon the feelings of any true poet with my poor feet."

This brought a great laugh and shouts came from all sides. "No! How then? Freneau forever! Go on!" And he, cocking his legs, though with a wary eye on the captain's sword-arm, sang lustily on.

"'Go Hermes to Libra (you're one of her gallants)
And ask her,' said Jove, 'for the loan of her balance;
How else should I know what the portions will weigh,
Or which of the combatants carry the day?'

"Then searching about with his fingers for Britain,
He said, 'This same island I can not well hit on!'

At last he exclaimed, 'I am surely upon it!
I think I have hold of a Highlander's bonnet!

"'So now, my dear Juno, pray give me my mittens,
(These insects I'm going to handle are Britons)
I'll draw up their isle with a finger and thumb
As a doctor extracts an old tooth from the gum.'"

Foy got upright, letting loose an oath. "You damned whipper-snapper," he hissed, "you need the flat of a blade! Have a care how you stout your greasy treason!"

Freneau did not stop, only his delicate hand closed tight around the handle of the tankard:

"Then he raised her aloft—but to shorten the tale,
She looked like a clod in the opposite scale—
Columbia so large and Britannia so small,
Jove needed his glasses to see her at all."

Foy leaped around the table, dragging off his sword, and made so cruel a lunge at Freneau that Byrd looked to see the matter ended then once for all, but he, with a lithe swerve, bent sidewise and the blade gouged the oak instead.

Then there was a pandemonium in truth. The young men, none of them, wore any weapon—it being punishable by a fine of ten shillings Proclamation

money at the college—but they were quarrelsome enough, God knows! The scarlet coat, which it seemed had gained scant notice before, was like the flaunting of a red rag to a herd of young bulls. But a fair part of them were past sobriety and for a moment they stood uncertain.

Freneau drew back and poised with the tankard raised to hurl in Foy's face as he came at him with a spring like a cat.

Then, as the arm went up and past him, Byrd struck down the blade with a chair and at the same instant, tilting with his shoulder, sent Foy lengthwise into the corner, where he fell with a curse, amid a rattle of bottles from the overturned table.

There was suddenly a crash of hurled crockery —a whirl of swearing where the aide lay with the table pinned across his chest—an instant view, bulging in the doorway, of the figure and stern face of Master Hooke with a stout cudgel in his hand—a sudden cry of "Lights! Lights!"—the snuffing of candle wicks—a scramble through a window. Then the dim moonlight and a spurting race down the dusty high-road, with a gust of mixed panting and laughter. Behind, dying in the distance, a fleer of oaths and the clashing of lanterns.

"'Twas prettily done, sir," vowed Freneau as the chase fell slower. "For which I thank you. He was

near to spitting me. As it is, I was fetched a strong kick in the side. By the Lord, you were not slow with that shoulder blow. Yet heaven made you slim. *Ohimé!* Would 'twere my forte instead of sorry jingling!"

It was impossible not to like Freneau, for he bubbled with gaiety like a tea-kettle. Byrd perceived in five minutes that he took to controversy like a babe to mother's milk, rejoiced to sniff the odor of insurrection, cherished most dearly his hatreds and loved rhyming as he loved the sea.

The two had reached the common and were rounding the angle of the great building which fronted the moon-silvered sward, when, out of the shadow of a live-oak, two long muscular arms stretched and laid upon their sleeves, while a stern voice with a vibrant nasal demanded of them their names and their stations and whether they were students of the college.

Byrd's comrade sputtered something.

"H-m—Finlay Secundus!" exclaimed the voice. "Were ye not fined only last week, Finlay Secundus?"

"'Tis I, Philip Freneau, sir."

The owner of the arms turned them about to the moonlight and let go his hold grudgingly. "I would ye were under the regular rules of the college, Freneau," he said, "Ye got a sheep-skin four

years since from Prince-town,—by the skin of the teeth, I warrant—and ye are as disorderly as the worst of my collegiates."

"Sir," said Freneau, with a gesture which made his rings sparkle in the moonlight, "I crave your pardon. My friend and I were peaceably discussing the lyric muse in the College Inn when we were set upon by a scurvy soldier who took offense at the honest sentiments of a song which I but sang by way of illustration. So, not wishing to embroil ourselves with any, we made our escape. 'Tis Sir Intolerance you hear now, swearing the dust from the high-road."

A last mouthful of blaspheming was borne on the breeze. The visage above them deepened its lines.

"What was the song?"

"A poor rhyme of my own, within which Jove doth weigh the Americas over against the isle of Britain, somewhat to the latter's discredit, 'tis true," and he sighed becomingly.

In the dim light Byrd saw a beady frown twisting the corners of John Camm's grim mouth.

"Aye, some rebellious rigmarole!" he thundered "There is no dearth of rebellion taught at Prince-town, they say! A very nursery of sedition, and that pinch-nose Presbyterian, John Witherspoon, shall answer for it to the crown! He fought at Falkirk

for the pretender—would the king had not softened after Culloden! An he had not, the psalm-singing Belialite were lying yet in the castle of Donne, where he were better off!"

He stalked off muttering, and Freneau sat down on the grass in a dry laughter.

"I clean forgot to ask your name, sir," said he, still chuckling, to Byrd, as they said goodnight.

"Francis Byrd," answered the other, "of Westover!"

"Oh Lord!" said Freneau to himself as he watched him go. "Would the doctor had known it. And his father on the governor's Council, too! Oh Lord!"

As Francis stood by the fire-place that night chatting with his mother, the door opened. His father limped in tittering ferociously, and Betsy behind him, burst upon the pair like a petticoated whirlwind.

"Mother! Frank! Lord Fairfax introduced the new marquis in the Apollo Room this evening! And who do you suppose he is? He is that horrid, impudent young man who gave Anne the redemptioner woman on the York-town wharf!"

"Mercy me!" ejaculated Mrs. Byrd. "That designing girl! Colonel, what on earth are you so amused about?"

CHAPTER XIII

LOVE'S SUPREME SURRENDER

The Marquis de la Trouerie was a huge success. Williamsburg's wealth and beauty vied in entertaining him, and no rout was complete without him.

At the Raleigh Tavern, whose low wooden walls were kept a-throb with packs of new deviltries brought by young bloods of the navy from the sloop-of-war "Fowey," come to anchor in York Roads, he was the center of observation when he diced. Commissions in the royal navy went for gold in that rotten reign, and their holders were younger sons with as much money to spend as the younger sons of the broad manors of Virginia.

Young Brooke, who, by aid of half the broken-fortuned harpies and rooks of London, had long ago run through all he could lay hands on, and whose talk was always: "When I hunted at Tunbridge Wells with my Lord This," or "When my Lord That had me at Hendron Castle for Easter," had now nobility near at home to descant upon.

"A great man in France," he would enlighten the

room-full, smoothing his ruffles. "Favorite of Marie Antoinette's, they say, and as rich as John Dory. Egad, I'd like the pattern of the coat he had on this morning!"

As for the marquis, he took his honors quietly, superbly. More than once it was reported that he had dined privately with the royal governor, but he himself clearly thought it scarce worth mentioning.

An interesting story of a duel with Captain Foy gained currency for a time. The captain was said to have wounded the marquis slightly by foul means, but Foy was absent much of the time on business for the governor, and the story was forgotten save for the passing glamour it cast upon the new favorite.

The nobleman's preference for the beauty of Williamsburg was soon perceived, and very early Mrs. Byrd had begun to hint at broken hearts and the folly of young girls who set their eyes too high.

Anne herself was never so beautiful, never so brilliant, never so wilfully captivating, as now when a scarf of gaiety hid the passion of many hearts fermenting.

On an afternoon they two, Anne and Armand, walked slowly under the pines that stretched down from the gateway of Gladden Hall.

The sky was a clean, cold steel. Early twilight blended the delicious mingled-brown and dull-orange of the singed fields with the waxen-green of the red-pricked holly bushes, and the frozen glare of ice-ponds shone bleakly in the stubble. Above the collar of her great-coat Anne's face was rosed with the tang of the frosty air which turned the breath to ghost-faint smoke curdles. Their steps broke crisply through the crusted rime, and from the fields came the tinkling of belled sheep nipping withered grass and the whir of shy partridges scudding through rustles of weeds dry as dead wasps.

A sense of repression was upon her—a restraint that had been growing since the last day at Greenway Court. It had risen out of that elusive happiness which comes to a woman's heart as light as butterfly-wings and leaves a terror. It was a longing, delicious fear of what she at the same time dreaded and desired—the instinct to ward off the actual event which her heart knew was inevitable.

Just before the martletted gateway he stopped.

"You are cruel to me, Mademoiselle." His voice was anxious, vibrating, longing.

"Why cruel, Monsieur?"

"Ah, I need not tell you that!" he said, looking at her earnestly. "Is it that I have failed? Am I

not, somehow, what you would wish in—a nobleman? Is there something lacking?"

She shook her head. "No, no!"

"Yet something is different. I have searched so hard to find what it is. I have seen you at the routs and have danced with you, but you are not the same. At Greenway Court, there where the leaves were falling—I wish it could have been so always, us two, in the forest!—you were kinder and not so cold to me!"

"Marquis!" There was a splendor of color in her face, bent sweet to him; her eyes, tinted and lustrous, were gay beneath the warm glimmer of her hair.

"Marquis!" repeated the young man, flushing. "I was not that to you in the forest. I found then that you were not like the ladies of my own land, who know naught save grandeur and titles, but that you could be above such things—that you were such a one as I have dreamed must be somewhere. I ask you only to be to me as you were then—as you were that day when the governor came back—when I sat with you on the hillside. Can you forget, Mademoiselle, that I am not just the same that I was then?"

"You are so much more; then I did not know who you were."

"I would the governor had not come," he said. "I would have remained to you just the same as I had been. The same as when for one moment I held you in the broken coach, and that moment when I opened my eyes at Greenway Court and saw your face!"

She felt her hands trembling, her heart beating its way through her breast. His voice was very low as he went on:

"A man finds sometime the one of all the world he would not have cold to him. He may never have seen her before—her whom he has looked for all his life—the woman in his heart! But he always knows her when he hears her speak! He can never know when or where that may be. It is at the ball, or walking in the street—or riding—in a coach. That day, Mademoiselle . . And it was before you knew! I was just Monsieur Armand, not the Marquis de la Trouerie. I was not great then, but just a man—and unworthy!"

"No," she said, her tone tremulous. "Not unworthy. That night at the tavern in Winchester—that was the bravest thing I had ever seen; the noblest! Do you think anything, *anything,* could make me forget that?"

"And you would have come to me! But now—but now—"

She looked at him with a little vibrant thrill of pride. How sweetly blind he was! "Now?" she asked.

"Now I can only ask you to remember that it was Monsieur Armand—not the marquis—who knelt to you when you laid your hand on his head that night at Winchester, with the whippoorwill and the moonlight; and who told you—what he is trying to tell you now—what he tried to tell you when you saw him lying at Greenway Court, only you would not listen."

She turned to him a look that was all melting, all tenderness—all confusion of impulses—a look that caught him and held him spell-bound.

"You kissed me," cried Armand in a triumphant voice. "You kissed me! It was *not* a dream! Look in my eyes."

She looked at him, paling, feeling her hands imprisoned in his own. He laughed with a low, fierce delight, for her breath was quick, her eyes like mist and fire.

"Do you love me?" he breathed, a sudden passion leaping in his voice. "Do you love me?" He caught her close to him. The whole world turned beneath her feet and the stars shook. "My gold rose! Tell me! Is it so!"

She moved her head with a mingled gesture of

pride, of shame of yielding, of assent. Then with a little cry, frightened yet joyful, she felt his arms, masterful, draw her close to him and stood trembling, joyous, a wave of love engulfing her.

"Answer me," he said. "The night we sat in the rustic house and the sun was a big red flower closing. You remember what I asked you?"

"Yes . . . "

"If the man you loved—if I—should come to be mean and unworthy before the world—"

"But you are not!"

"If I *were.*"

"My king!"

"If you saw me sneered at, despised, but still loving, still worshiping—"

"I would love you! I would *love* you!"

A light came over his face, brilliant and pale. "With the love that is the all, that is greater than the world, that is above station, above honors, above name? That outlasts them all?"

Her arms went up about his neck and their lips met in a first long kiss.

"All," she whispered. "All! All! Louis! My beloved!"

Anne peered into the warm library of Gladden Hall, all aglow with her strange new delight. The fire was low and doming embers made the dusk rosy

and uncertain. She smiled as she saw the dim figure sitting with feet outstretched, just the top of the powdered peruke showing over the back of the big chair.

With her finger on her lips in that instinctive pantomime that belongs to woman, she stole across the floor on tiptoe and swooping suddenly, clapped her cold palms over the eyes of the solitary occupant and laughed gaily as he started and put warm hands to her chill ones.

"I have a secret to tell you—," she breathed with a fluttering laugh, "and you mustn't look at me when I say it. I wonder if any one in Virginia can be as happy as I am! The Marquis de la Trouerie—uncle, he has asked me to wed him—"

She ended with a subdued scream, and stumbling, went back a few steps. For the figure that had risen from the chair was not Colonel Tillotson. Even in the dim light as she retreated, she could see the glare of flaming malice in his look, and the sneer curling his full lips.

"I tell you, Captain Jarrat," she said, in a wave of fierce anger, "I hate you! I hate your face and your crafty ways. Ah," she ended, stamping her foot, "no gentleman would have let me speak—would have listened."

"I am no marquis," Jarrat rejoined with a ghastly

smile. "I am only sorry I did not hear the end of that sweet confidence. The fair Mistress Tillotson answered that she would joy to wed the noble gentleman, I suppose."

"Aye, and if she did?"

He laughed—a jarring, mirthless laugh.

"Why then, I who have failed to win her with a simple soldier's name should wish her joy of the tinsel of her title."

"You mistake," she cried passionately. "An you were the king himself, I would not look at you. The man I love, I would wed the same, were he poor and nameless and of no report, aye, a laborer in the fields, instead of the nobleman he is!"

A voice in the hall struck across the quivering tones:

"Rashleigh, a bottle of my best canary and stir your bones about it. Come in, come in, Marquis. We shall have a glass to this, I promise you." The door opened and Colonel Tillotson came forward, blinking in the blaze of the branched candlestick he carried.

"Ah, here you are, Anne, entrenched in the dusk with reinforcements, eh? Well, the battle is over and I have surrendered."

She had raised her hand to stop him. "Uncle," she warned, "you have a guest."

The colonel stopped at sight of the other in some confusion.

"Why!" he exclaimed, "I am indeed sorry. Rashleigh, you black rascal, why did you not tell me the captain was here?"

"I did but call to bear a message to your niece, Colonel," Jarrat answered. "I have delivered it. I must offer apologies for being an intruder at such a moment."

"Tut!" said the colonel. "Rashleigh, set that tray here. Another glass for the captain. Captain, we drink unending happiness to a fair woman and a gallant cavalier!"

Jarrat raised the slim glass with its topaz liquid and his smile lingered darkly on Anne's face still anger-white. The smile hid a quality that made her shiver.

"A fair woman," he repeated, "and—a noble gentleman! What more pleasant toast? Now must I leave you and back to Williamsburg. Mistress, I kiss your hand. Marquis, my most blithe felicitations. Colonel, I beg you will not disturb yourself; I will get my horse myself. Gentlemen, I bid you good day!"

CHAPTER XIV

THE HOUR AND THE MAN

The tension in Virginia was grown thin. Again and again the burly Earl of Dunmore prorogued the Assembly on the pretext of popular excitement. The burgesses submitted with a bow, and the fiddles played in their town-houses. Dunmore thought himself a diplomat and went on wining his Tory favorites at the palace. But under the music was an ominous muttering.

News came of the king's speech on the opening of Parliament. The Colonies' protests were "unwarranted attempts to obstruct the commerce of this kingdom by unlawful combinations," and showed "a most daring spirit of resistance and disobedience to the law." This pronouncement was received in Williamsburg with an intense astonishment.

And what, meantime, had Henry been doing?

Restless, eager, he had ridden hither and thither like a sallow shadow—at court houses calling the

minute-men—overseeing the election of the Committees recommended by the Congress—at Alberti's poring over lists with Jefferson—uniting North and South in a network of nerves, laboring, tireless and convincing.

It is a thing to note, since rebellion commonly springs from the people rather than from the quality, that it was contrary in Virginia. There the aristocracy was not Tory. There were few enough like my Lord Fairfax, who, born noble, held nobly to their loyalty. Those who held with the king, besides the toad-eaters, were for the most part the lower classes, office-holders, tradesmen who looked for sales, lawyers just over from London. The stanchest rebels were the great landed planters Sedition was in the club-room and the parlor; one must to the tavern-bar for toasts to the king.

And so came about this strange thing: That Williamsburg,—the miniature copy of the Court of St. James, aping the manners of the royal palace, its old church graveyard and college chapel standing for Westminster Abbey and St. Paul's—that this spot should prove "The Heart of the Rebellion." If this fact alone remained, it might well make the world wonder at the enduring blindness of the king's ministers and whether God had not, indeed, covered their eyes because He would have it so.

It was little George cared for the action of the first Congress, halting, ineffectual, or for the petitions of British merchants. He had set his jaw. In vain the Earl of Chatham moved in the House of Lords to withdraw the troops from Boston. Instead, the Colonies received a bill offering pardon to repentant rebels, and the patriots of Virginia heard with shocked surprise *that this excepted Patrick Henry!*

On the day this news was printed in the Williamsburg Gazette, Henry and Jefferson met at Alberti's and set out on horseback for Richmond. There, in St. John's Church, the new Virginia Convention, mindful of the bloody threats of the sinister governor, had elected to meet, and thither had gone a half of Williamsburg, leaving Dunmore with his troops at his palace to bite his nails in impotent anger.

The twenty-third of March dawned over Richmond's unwonted bustle in a quivering wizard haze of intense blue, where cloud-puffs swam like lazily pluming swans. Anne had arrived the night before at Goochland and drove in that morning in the Payne chariot. Spring was up—the earth quick with it. All along the way wild crab-apple boughs droned with clinging bees, and by the snake-fence rows of peach trees had pitched their tents of bloom.

She met Henry in front of the Indian Queen Inn and walked with him up toward the church-yard, now filling with a vast throng.

"Tell me," she questioned eagerly. "Will it come to-day?"

He looked down at her with that rare smile which seemed to be the higher part of him, gilding and transfiguring his other self. "What faith you have in me!" he said.

"I know," she answered. "I have seen it in your face. No one in Virginia can do it save you—none of them! It must be the voice before the arm."

"The spark before the explosion," he muttered. "And the train is nearly laid." His hands moved restlessly.

"I have longed—prayed for some new overt act of Dunmore's that should be spark to powder. But he lies low. And it must come from us. You were right when you said that, last fall at Winchester. Boston is trodden on, but she lies quiet. The Colonies look to us. It is the voice of the South—of Virginia that is wanting."

He stopped. Jefferson was hasting toward them. He bowed to Anne.

"Have you heard the buzz from London?" he asked Henry hurriedly. "'Tis all among the dele-

gates. 'Tis declared that our petitions to the king are graciously received, that all the acts will be repealed save the admiralty and declaratory, and that North and Dartmouth will be replaced."

"Aye," burst Henry fiercely. "Another Tory tale. And they will waver again. Tom, Tom, it must be now or never!"

He stopped abruptly and strode across the churchyard over the matted ivy on the shrunken mounds, and, threading his way between the old slate tombstones, upright like black lichened coffin-lids, entered the edifice.

From her seat in the west gallery, whither Jefferson had taken her, Anne surveyed the scene below.

The first proceedings interested her little—the reading of Jamaica's late memorial to the king—and her gaze wandered. Through the open windows she could hear the hum of the great crowd about the building and catch a glimmer of the foaming James. The space below her was packed and full of a strange intentness.

Here and there she could see faces which she knew. The ladies of Richmond were scattered through both galleries. Frenean and young St. George Tucker were leaning over the rail opposite.

Jefferson and Colonel Benjamin Harrison of Berkeley sat together just below Peyton Randolph the president.

Colonel Washington sat far back, hands on knees, quiet and meditating, and just below her Mr. Thomas Nelson shifted nervously in his seat, turning his eyes now there, now here.

Well to the front sat Richard Henry Lee of Chantilly, "the gentleman of the silver hand"; the black bandage he wore over his hand fascinated her. She had heard it said he wore it to hide a wound he got swan-shooting on the Potomac.

Her attention came back with a start as she heard the resolution, in answer to Jamaica, that "it is the most ardent wish of this Colony, and we are persuaded of the whole continent of North America, to see a speedy return to those halcyon days when we lived a free and happy people." As she looked down at Henry, Anne saw that he was scribbling on a scrap of paper.

There was a hush as he arose and a buzz of expectancy as he mounted the rostrum. He held in his hand the paper upon which he had been scribbling.

Anne felt a touch of disappointment at the cold, measured quality of his tone. With that flicker-

ing half-smile which meant dissent, he moved an amendment to the Jamaica resolutions. He read without a gesture, in pronunciation as plain as homespun. His voice moved evenly, almost carelessly, over the periods.

But, as he progressed, the Assembly awoke with a shock, and Anne saw a certain ripple, almost of alarm, surge over it. Henry had spoken the phrase, "our inestimable rights and liberties."

At that moment the speaker raised his voice, and the last words came challenge-like, the snap of a whip—"We do resolve, therefore, *that this Colony be put in a state of defense and that there be a committee to prepare a plan for embodying, arming and disciplining such a number of men as may be sufficient for that purpose.*"

Anne looked at Henry in the black clothes and tie-wig which set off his face, and drew a breath The humility, the diffidence, the modesty of address were gone, and in their place was sternness. Even his voice had grown harsh, as though in menace, and on the Convention, uncertain and wavering, those lovers of the "halcyon days," the menace fell. It was the plunge, from hesitation to resolve, from expostulation to powder. The fire had fallen!

Henry knew his men. All these years he had

been learning them—drawing them out, questioning, story-telling, watching effects, experimenting in their emotions.

His eye held every man within those walls. He turned it upon Richard Henry Lee, and he, his polished oratory forgot, hurled a blunt second at the chair.

Mr. Pendleton, Colonel Harrison limping from the gout, and Colonel Richard Bland got upon their feet with arched frowns, barking that such action was "premature," and at the word Anne saw a pale scorn burn Henry's face. These, who had so lately sat in the Continental Congress, prated of "dignified patience," "filial respect and discretion," "the relenting of the sovereign," "the nakedness of the Colonies."

They were to see more clearly later, when one of them was to sign at Philadelphia the paper which struck from the British realm a territory far exceeding its whole extent under the Plantagenets and Tudors.

Anne had afterward no certain recollection of how Henry began in answer; all impression was swallowed up in that thrill which held every hearer. His long, thin visage was extra-dark and there was no blood in his sallow cheeks. Under his straight forehead and knit, black brows, his eyes, penetrating,

gray-black, sunk in his head, turned chameleon-like.

A surpassing instrument is the human voice! Byrd, who had so often heard Henry hallooing across the fields, or laughing at his own humors, heard his voice now as something utterly unaccustomed—some master trumpet sound which made all under it flush and pale as to the cry of meeting metal. It has been said that he spoke as Homer wrote.

"Shall we shut our eyes—we wise men struggling for liberty—and listen to the song of the siren till she transforms us to beasts?" he cried. "Shall we, having eyes, see not, and, having ears, hear not the tidings of our temporal salvation? For my part, I will know the worst and I will provide for it. I can not judge the future but by the past, and by the past how shall you solace yourselves? What is there in the conduct of the British ministries of the past ten years to justify hope?"

As he went on, passion crept over his face like the wind that precedes a storm, his lean neck was scarlet and corded with white lines, and his eyes glared hollowly.

"Do you regard the insidious smiles with which our petitions are received? Be not betrayed with a kiss!"

Sitting in a quiver of feeling, with fingers clasp-

ing the gallery ledge, Anne felt the shaken pulses of the audience. Under the intrepid metaphor she saw the messenger of the Colonial Assembly standing before the king's attorney-general entreating that Virginia had souls to be saved as well as England, and the brutish answer: "Damn your *souls!* Make *tobacco.*" She saw the Colonies supplicating on their knees, spurned, contemned, spit upon. She saw chains forging, navies building, armies gathering. She saw British ministers, like harpies, with cold eyes upon the green of the Americas.

Henry's voice had risen louder, more intense, and his colorless features and eyes of fire had become terrible to look upon. He sat upon the whirlwind. The very walls seemed to rock with vibrations.

"There is no longer any room for hope! If we wish to be free . . . if we mean to preserve those privileges for which we have been so long contending . . . if we mean not to abandon the struggle we have vowed never to abandon until its object be obtained . . then we must fight. *We must fight!* An appeal to arms, to the God of Hosts, is all that is left us."

More than one, listening, like Francis Byrd, felt the king's cause shrivel from their hearts. Leaning far over the gallery, Anne saw young St. George

Tucker, his face as strained as hers. To his eyes it was a Cato of Utica awing the Gauls who had profaned the Roman Senate—a Daniel reading the handwriting to Belshazzar's thousand lords—a St. Paul calling from the hill of Athens—a Fate crying a trumpet doom from heaven: *"We must fight!"*

Throughout that throng, sitting on the benches and standing in the aisles, men leaned forward beside themselves, their faces pale, sick with excitement, staring at the speaker.

Anne dragged her eyes from Henry's. Amid the sea, there was one face that had not moved a line. It was Colonel Washington's. He sat stonelike, as immovable as a bishop at his prayers, his hands still upon his knees. He was as a soldier should be—cool of head and saving passion for the hand. And as a soldier, he was slow to disallegiance. But cold as he seemed when Henry bent the wills of that assembly and whipped the conservatives to the wall, there was a glitter in his eye that leaped to flame behind the quiet mask.

"They tell us that we are weak. When shall we be stronger? Will it be next week, or next year? When we are totally disarmed and when a British guard is in every house? Shall we lie still till our enemies have bound us hand and foot? We cry 'peace, peace,' but there *is* no peace. Why stand we

here idle? What do you wish? We are three millions of people, armed in the holy cause of liberty and invincible! We shall not fight our battle alone! The war is inevitable . . . and let it come. *Let it come!*"

Henry's voice, which had been like a battle shout, sank in his throat. His form bowed itself in the attitude of a galley slave. On his crossed wrists the felon's manacles seemed actually to be visible. His very tone thrilled helplessness and heart-broken agony.

"And if we chose," he said heavily, "there is no retreat save slavery. Our chains are ready. We may hear their clanking on the plains of Boston! Is life so dear, or peace so sweet as to be so purchased?"

He lifted his chained hands toward heaven. "Forbid it," he prayed, "Almighty God!"

With the words he straightened. His tendons strained against the fetters and they fell from his wrists, as he sent a look at the quaking loyalists of the house that chilled their blood.

"I know not what course others may take." Oh, the hissing scorn of that now triumphant voice! "But as for me—as for me—give me liberty, or give me death!"

Anne heard what followed as in a dream. She

heard the studied oratory of Richard Henry Lee, aided by the elegant gestures he practised before the mirror. She heard Thomas Nelson, the richest man in Virginia, no longer shifting in his seat, now crying out that if British troops should be landed in the county of which he was lieutenant he would obey no forbidding, but call his militia and repel them at the water's edge.

She saw standing on the Committee appointed to carry out Henry's resolution to arm the Colony —greatest marvel of all,—the very men who had cried out against it—Mr. Pendleton, Colonel Harrison, Colonel Bland.

What had come was transformation. Where had been doubt was confidence, where had been cross-purpose was unity. It was but a spark, blown by the wind of destiny, but it illumined the torch. It lightened the shadow that had been over a people, its impulses and aspirations. It lit forge-fires throughout the land, and in their glare, face to face, thereafter stood two passions each recognizing the other. One lustful, one sublime; both naked and unashamed. Oppression and Liberty.

At that moment, a vast army began forming. From those walls, in which, later, Benedict Arnold was to quarter his British marauders, the message flew that day. One by one the battalions gathered,

strong but invisible. They were not called by drum or trumpet. They had no camp, nor field nor garrison. But at plow, in shop or in chamber the recruits silently answered the summons and stood ready.

It had been The Hour and The Man. The Hour had started the initial impulse of the Revolution and The Man was Patrick Henry.

On the following Saturday, as the planters were riding again into Williamsburg, Governor Dunmore issued a proclamation forbidding the appointment of Virginian delegates to the new Continental Congress, and next day the planters crowded Bruton Church, whose flagged aisles and whitewashed walls echoed a sermon by the Reverend Mr. Price, preaching in his gown upon a bitter text to be found in the Book of Joshua:

"And I have given you a land for which ye did not labor . . . of the vineyards and olive-yards which ye planted not do ye eat.

"Now, therefore, . . . put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the flood."

And the Reverend John Camm, president of William and Mary College, returning from the service with his Tory nostrils offended, found his

students indulging in a joyful riot over the following, of no uncertain authorship, printed in large hand upon a placard suspended over his prayer-desk in the lecture-room:

NOT ONLY FROM BRITISH DEPENDENCE, BUT ALSO—

From our Noble King Log with his tooth-full of brains,
From the caitiff Lord North, who would bind us in chains,
From the group at St. James's that slight our petitions,
And fools that are waiting for further submissions—
Libera nos, Domine!

From Bishops in Britain who butchers are grown,
From slaves that would die for a smile from the throne,
From lords of the Council who fight against freedom,
Who still follow on where delusion shall lead 'em—
Libera nos, Domine!

From the valiant Dunmore, with his crew of banditti,
Who bullies Virginians at Williamsburg city,
So deeply bemired with his stupid misleadings
As to dream that his pen can stop Congress proceedings—
Libera nos, Domine!

CHAPTER XV

THE DANCE ABOVE THE VOLCANO

"Shut the door," the earl commanded.

Foy did so, and returned to his seat across from the governor, in the arras-walled council chamber at the palace. He sent a snaky look at Armand, who sat at ease in egg-blue satin and lace, attired for the evening's rout. And the look was malevolent.

Lord Dunmore's face this night focused slow hate and he sat hunched in his chair. "Has Conolly come from the ship yet, Foy?" he asked.

The other shook his head.

"Hell's tooth!" raved the earl, leaping from his seat and striding up and down. "I'll show them! To-morrow they shall whistle for their powder! There are the Indians still, and then the slaves. If I have to raise the plantations, I'll bring these sniveling rebels to their knees! Freedom, forsooth! 'Tis the king's hand rules and my hand for the king's in the Virginias!"

He paused in front of Armand and beat the table with his fist:

"And the slipperiest of them all you shall snare us, my fine Marquis. 'Tis Patrick Henry! Haunch of a basted swine! A nice picture his tongue licks up for the clods! He is in Williamsburg to-night, and he shall not leave it till he sails for London and a gallows-tree!" He strode off again, in a rage, his face working like a Satan's.

At last he left off. "Give him his orders, Foy," he said thickly.

Foy leaned forward, chin in palm, and spoke:

"You will write a message now to Henry which I shall dictate. It will state that you are in receipt of news from France affecting the Colonies and desire his immediate presence at a place which I shall name. You shall go thither to await Henry and detain him there till my own arrival with an armed file. Do I make myself clear?"

The young foreigner waved his embroidered arm lightly. "I beg to remind his Excellency of our bargain."

The governor faced around with something like a snarl and sat down heavily.

"I was to write certain letters to De Vergennes, King Louis's minister, and to Beaumarchais,—letters in the hand of the Marquis de la Trouerie,

signed with his signature and seal. These have been written. They have said of the situation in this Colony only what you would have them say, have they not? And you have sent them. Is it not so?"

The earl narrowed his eyes.

"I have done your Excellency's bidding. You are not satisfied. Very good, Monsieur. We turn the page, then."

"Ho!" said Foy. "'Tis not as difficult for a nobleman to get money, eh, Master Clerk? What fine colonial bird have you plucked now? I' faith, a nice swagger of a sudden! Marry, art going to wed with a plantation, then?"

Lord Dunmore snorted and threw himself forward in his chair.

"Nay!" he shouted "The bargain ends not here, my lily-livered poacher! Letters, haith, when there is open rebellion? Small need I have for pen-work now! 'Tis neck-twisting I am for, and you shall aid me, by the Lord! with a bait for that stubborn rump Henry!"

Foy drew forward pen and paper. "Will you write?" he asked.

"No," said Armand composedly.

His Lordship's face, from livid, turned a volcanic purple.

"Your Excellency," went on the young man, "will recall my social position. Spy? Betray? Surely not, Messieurs!" He moved his hand as though dismissing an indiscreet pleasantry.

The earl bit off an oath with head thrust forward, his jaw dropped like a lion lapping blood.

Armand had risen. "I shall see you to-night amid the ladies, Monsieur?" he asked of Foy. "A very good night to your Excellency."

"I shall be eager to carry out any plans your Excellency may be pleased to favor," said Foy as the door closed.

The Apollo Room that evening was a blaze of splendor. To and fro moved belles and macaronis, dame and ruffled squire; the former stiff in brocades, the latter in satin and laces, clanking carven dress-swords, tapping carven snuff-boxes, bowing in greeting, bending in the gavotte. The air was fragrant with the first flowers, with perfume and scented powder from head-dress and wig. Over all was a glare of candle-light from many-pronged sconces upon the walls and through the buzz of wit and raillery the fiddles in the corner wove a constant tune.

It was the last dance of the old régime. All knew the nearness of the cloud—all heard the rum-

ble of the storm. But courtesy in Virginia was as the grain in wood. There it was not until the last that Tories had perforce to leave the Colony; when all who were not Tories turned Democrats and went into the Revolutionary armies; when gentlemen took the field and their ladies toiled at home with lint or homespun.

Now, though the bolt was speeding, until it fell, Tory and Whig met and danced in tavern and in hall. Smile and bow changed not a whit. Sparkle was over all.

But it was only a shell of gaiety; the core was a volcano.

In the outer hall of the Raleigh, behind the shifting throng of gallants at the door of the Apollo Room, Jarrat looked across a minuet, and in glimpses caught between the stately moving figures, he saw Anne.

Never had she seemed so beautiful, her head golden-misted in the light, the long, fringing lashes shading the dusky blue of her eyes. She stood, full-veined, exultant, under the white candles, her dress dove-colored, flowered in large trees, with cherry-tinted stays trimmed in blue and silver. On her hair, drawn high, sat a web-like capuchin.

Jarrat's face sprang scarlet—a hopeless, helpless rage of bitter longing. With him it was moth and

flame. And the wing-singeing had become a joy of torture.

The Marquis de la Trouerie passed into the assembly. Gallants crowded to greet him. Brooke fawned upon his hand. He became a sun with a train of lesser satellites. He moved leisurely through the throng, answering the shafts of the wits, bowing to plump Mrs. Byrd among the dowagers, approaching the end of the room, where Anne, beside Colonel Tillotson's soldierly black, held her constant court, gilded by the effulgence which the open worship of the favorite of fashion had thrown upon her.

Very lovely she looked to Breckinridge Cary, just arrived on a visit from Lancaster. He watched her from where he chatted with Byrd, whom he had last seen in Covent Garden shortly before he left England for home. He had known her from a child at Gladden Hall. The Old World, he thought, could never have bred her—she was fruit of the New, of its fire and full blood, its daring, its pride and prodigality—born of its dewy valleys and its untouched, cavernous forests—a thing that must have withered in the heavy air of London.

"Yonder comes our glass of fashion, Mr. Cary," boasted Brooke, joining them. "Ah, you can always tell your real nobleman! What a waistcoat!"

he simpered, ogling it rapturously. "Damme if Master Coolbaugh shall not cut me one like it!"

Cary looked with a flash of recognition that broadened into a stare of amazement. He saw a figure encased splendidly in satin, with rare point dropping from the sleeves, jewels gleaming from the ruffles, a sword-hilt on which blood-rubies burned, a breast sparkling with a bediamonded order.

"The marquis is late," Brooke added.

"The marquis?" Cary's eyes opened wide

"That," said Byrd, "is the Marquis de la Trouerie."

Cary bent closer. There could be no mistake. No mistake! And all Williamsburg deceived! The circle of beaux parted, rolled back at the newcomer's approach, and Anne's face lifted itself, startled and joyful—a one look which told it all to Cary, flash-like. Oh, the pity of it!

Jarrat, in his red coat, saw too from the hall; saw her smiling, but not to his words, glowing, but not for him, and evil crept into his face till every feature seemed a sin.

"Sweet Sir Lobster!" said a lackadaisical voice behind him. "Peaceful as ever I see, and with uniform all unsullied. I' faith, I warrant no redskin might outstrip you on the far Scioto."

"Not now, Master Freneau," said Jarrat, breathing heavily. "Not now! To-night I am occupied."

"Alas! Poor Scarlet! Is it not a raree-show? —mayhap 'twill inspire me to an ode. Shall I sing a Trouerie caparisoned for the lists of love? See! To be gazed at so . . . is it not worth a prince's ransom? Oh, adorable!"

He paused, his mocking black eyes on the other's smoldering face. "Behold the discomfited!" he went on. "Think you Mistress Tillotson has aught for the spruce coxcombs with diamond shoe-buckles and a macaroon elbow for snuff-taking? Nay, nay! Nor for a king's spy with a rusted sword!"

Jarrat for once had no retort. The outer door opened and Foy and three soldiers in his Majesty's uniform appeared. Foy carried a folded paper.

The four entered the inner door and stepped on to the crowded floor together. Freneau and Jarrat both pressed after them, the former in eager curiosity and the latter to slip into the background.

Anne stood with the marquis, her fingers on his arm, awaiting a minuet. The fiddles were weaving the first meshes of the tune. She felt his arm suddenly tighten, his clasp take closer hold.

"What is it?" she asked. There was a bustle at the lower end of the room.

He looked down at her. Something in his voice smote her. "Remember what you said to me at Greenway Court . . . what you said when we stood under the pines by Gladden Hall. If I should come to be mean and low and dishonorable before the world . . . "

"Look!" she cried. "They come this way. What can they want?"

"Listen!—low before the world, but still loving —still loving you!—"

An indefinable tremor came to her. The dancers were beginning to stop. Colonel Tillotson had turned his head.

Foy, followed by the soldiers, had paused in front of them, and was pointing to Armand. "Take him!" said he.

The fiddles broke off with a screech. The whole floor was stricken suddenly hushed, suddenly motionless. Anne could hear in Foy's throat his hoarse, savage breathing as the soldiers stepped forward. The assembly gasped, thunder-struck.

Then, instantly there was an uproar.

"Stop!" they insisted. A dozen dress-swords, among them Freneau's, came out clicking. The ladies shrank, the gentlemen came up furious, muttering curses against the royal governor.

"What is the meaning of this outrage, sir?"

Colonel Tillotson stood tall and threatening. "By what right lay you hands upon the person of the marquis?"

"'The marquis!'" said Foy. "I want no marquis. This is no more marquis than I am. I have here a warrant, signed by the royal governor of Virginia, for the seizure of the person of one Louis Armand, calling himself the Marquis de la Trouerie, swindler, impostor and conspirer against the peace of his Majesty's Colony. A fine sport he has made of you, ladies and gentlemen! Will you come hence peaceably," to Armand, "or shall I have you dragged?"

The hearers wavered. Mrs. Byrd had fixed her eyes on Anne's face, and in them was a tiny, feline glitter. Anne's hands were clasped about Armand's arm and a spot of indignant red burned either cheek.

"Oh, infamous!" she said clearly. "'Tis a lie!"

"Sir," asked Colonel Tillotson of Armand, his tone halting, "will you answer this?"

The young Frenchman's eyes were on Anne with a look ineffably tender, struggling with a sudden anguished shadow. White lines had fallen around his lips.

"Colonel Tillotson—gentlemen," said Foy, "there is not a particle of doubt, though the ras-

cal has been clever enough to deceive even his Excellency. Lack of proof has prevented his earlier exposure. This man crossed on the same ship as the nobleman he represents himself to be. The passengers of the vessel knew him in his true character."

"'Twas the Two Sisters," Anne declared. Her eyes sought out Cary. "Why—why,—*you* were on that ship! You left her in Hampton Roads. You must know. Tell them he lies!" Her tone was certain and defiant.

Cary's lips twitched. He looked at Armand, where he stood straight and quiet, his eyes on Anne's, and he seemed again to see that lithe form hurling itself against the brutal mate of the ship for the hurt of an outcast woman's heart. He struggled against a wish to cry out that the matter was not his business and fly. He dared not look at Anne, knowing what he must see there when he spoke.

"Mr. Cary was on the ship?" asked Foy distinctly.

Anne drew a long breath and a pallor suddenly struck her face. But she bent forward and laid her hand on Cary's arm.

"Answer!" she bade him. "Who is he?"

Cary raised his hand. "He is a gentleman, and he is a brave man. Beyond, I ask not!"

"Is he the Marquis de la Trouerie?" Anne's voice was clear and firm.

"He was my friend!" cried Cary.

"Is he the Marquis de la Trouerie?"

Cary's look turned to her. He saw the grayness in her cheek and the brave light in her eyes burned his heart cold. He looked from side to side,—at the sneering laugh of Foy's, at the calm, stern evenness of Colonel Tillotson, at Anne's face, now grown deadly white.

"Is he the Marquis de la Trouerie?"

"Answer, my friend," said Armand.

Cary's voice was husky as he spoke. "He is the marquis's secretary," said he.

The men standing nearest drew away from Armand at this. Anne had given a flinching start as if smitten by the flying terror of a bullet. It seemed to her that present, future, dreams, reality, heaven, earth, eternity, were all slipping away from her. Armand touched her hand gently, his face torn with conflict.

"You told me . . . . if the man you loved . . . " The words failed.

She raised her great eyes to his. "Are you the Marquis de la Trouerie?"

A whitening pain had conquered his face.

"I am Louis Armand," he said, as one whose heart is broken.

Anne closed her eyes and stood trembling, and in that moment he dropped his arms to his sides and turned to the waiting soldiers.

"Take him away!" said Foy.

Seeing, Anne struggled piteously to speak. She stood an instant with both hands stretched out after him; then she slipped back into Colonel Tillotson's arms.

The dance was breaking up as the door opened for Armand and his guards. The first streaks of dawn were piling the low eastern sky with a pale-green tone like glacier ice, against which the distant trees, new leafing, raised sharp-budded sprangles. Somewhere an early mock-bird was singing his heart out.

Then across the quiet struck discord. A far babble drew suddenly nearer. There was a din and a scurry of crying. Windows were opened.

"Haste!" fretted Foy. "To his Excellency with the prisoner. Conolly has been seen. The alarm is out and the town will rise!"

Gallants and dames issuing into the street in their ball finery, the ladies' rouged cheeks faded in the early light, saw a horseman who rode by bawling:

"The powder! the powder!" he shouted. "Dunmore's men have robbed the magazine!" And with the shout, the great bell of the palace began tolling the summons calling all soldiers of the king to assemble.

"The governor has come to his senses at last," Mrs. Byrd said with satisfaction as she came out to her chair. "We shall presently see these precious rebels scampering to their holes. You must go, I suppose, Francis."

"Aye, mother," he answered, his eyes bright with Anne's pain, and gave her his cheek to kiss.

But he did not go to the palace. The resignation of his commission went to the earl instead, and he himself hastened to the narrow house in Duke of Gloucester Street, which bore the name Alberti and the sign of the violin. It was long before he saw his mother again.

The volcano had burst. There is to be small doubt from this time where any Virginian stands. By noon the bank of the James River at Burwell's Ferry, where lies the man-o'-war Magdalen, whither Dunmore's crafty agent Conolly has marched his marines with the powder raped from the Williamsburg magazine, is black with threatening men.

Steadily numbers swell the crowd that chokes

Duke of Gloucester Street—city councillors, some in furtive delight at this loyal ruse, others stamping angrily, with powdered wigs askew and hands seeking the hilts of their dress-swords—sober men mounting and dismounting horses—ladies, brilliant as ever, in red-heeled shoes and clocked stockings, eager, excited, voluble. Here are all the aristocracy, the blue-bloods of the valley planters; here are the duller-garbed burgesses of the inner counties.

The mob surges up and down past a square, prim house of glazed brick brought as ballast in the tobacco ships. It is fronted by a little garden, through which leads a path between exact flower-beds of white lupins, love-in-a-mist and Canterbury bells, and here in his chair sits old Baron Fairfax, leaning on his cane, listing to the tumult, knowing it means anger against the royal authority, but not bending his stubborn loyalty enough to pass beyond the gate. He is all a-quiver with rage at the seizure of the marquis.

"Fools!" he storms, grinding his teeth. "Idiots! I will to the governor so soon as this cursed uproar ceases. The king shall hear of it!"

In his stronghold on Palace Street the royal governor sits glowering, listening to the hum. He has the powder; let the rebels rave. In the night he has converted his palace into a fort. Cannon

look from the windows; rows of muskets are lying on the floor to arm the household.

The Council, hurriedly summoned, are met in the library—a few smiling, Colonel Byrd wavering, some indignant. At the indignant ones the governor rages like a wild beast, vowing that if violence be offered him by the people he will proclaim freedom to the slaves and lay Williamsburg in ashes.

The streets are in a boil. Betsy, who has wept an hour for Anne's sake, looks on from the Byrd porch, while her mother, having heard of the defection of Francis, watches red-eyed behind her bed-room curtains.

The crowd has centered opposite in the wide square at the foot of Palace Street. There are cries: "The palace!" "To the palace!" The mass moves restlessly as if meditating an attack. Slower counsel prevails. There is a hubbub of talk.

Then a delegation is sent to the palace to demand the powder. Betsy sees them, four grave men, start from the crowd, go up the street, pass the guards, enter the door. There is a wait.

They return with their news. The wily earl has smoothed his rage, has heard them with courtesy; he has received the report that the slaves are about

to rise in an adjoining county—if the powder be needed at Williamsburg, he pledges his honor it shall be returned "in half an hour." The delegation have seen the muskets. The crowd smolders —is nonplussed.

The earl looks through an upper window and rubs his hands. These Virginians are no match for him!

Ah, the end is not yet. He has still to reckon with a sallow man who sits in the upper room at Alberti's.

This man is to ride like a whirlwind to New Castle, make a fiery appeal to the Hanover volunteers and to march back to Williamsburg at the head of five thousand men with arms in their hands.

Before they reach the town a spark flies along the angry streets that turns them to a flame—it is the news of the Battle of Lexington!

And when Patrick Henry marches into Duke of Gloucester Street, John Murray, Earl of Dunmore, *you pay for that powder.*

CHAPTER XVI

THE PACKET

The shadow of Anne's grief hung heavy over Gladden Hall a few days later, where Henry and Colonel Tillotson sat alone in the library conversing. It was the eve of the former's departure for the second Congress.

"Patrick"—the colonel came out squarely—"what make you of this arrest of La Trouerie?"

"There is something wrong, Colonel," he answered. "And 'twill out. Mark me, that young man is no charlatan. I would stake my soul he is not of low character. You are judge enough of human nature to know that."

"Cary was on the ship. Besides, he admitted it himself, when he was seized at the Raleigh."

Henry leaped from his seat with an exclamation.

"Granted he is not the marquis. The man is no impostor. I want nothing but that night at the King's Arms in Winchester to convince me of that. My God! You should have seen him fight Foy!

Hang your marquises! Armand is a man, I tell you! What was there to gain by a vulgar masquerade?"

Rashleigh at this juncture entered, bearing a salver.

"Letter for Mars' Henry," said he. "Mars' Randolph's Eb'nezer fotch it ober arter him fum Williamsburg dis mawnin'."

"Why," said Henry, breaking the seal, "'tis from Doctor Franklin. Business of the Colonies, surely. Stay—you shall hear it,—

"'London, January 10, 1775.

"'Sir—Dr. Craik, who needs no introduction to you, on his return to Virginia, will see that this reaches your hand. It will inform you that M. de Penet is arrived from Philadelphia. He astonished me much when he told me that it was too discreetly doubted in the Colonies as to the disposition of the Court of France with regard to us. The English Court here has little of this doubt; indeed, there has been actual trepidation. The good news I send by this letter will show you that there was abundant ground for such fears. Not only have King Louis and M. Turgot, his Minister of Finance, considered together by what means they might assist so unhappy and interesting a people, but I have just

learned that a nobleman of great family connection and great wealth is lately sailed for your Colony—an officer in the flower of his age, who has already proved his talents in Corsica. I am informed by our co-worker Beaumarchais, who is now here at the town-house of Lord Mayor Wilkes in Prince's Court, that this gentleman's judgment is much valued at Marseilles, and in case the state of the Cause in Virginia (which the king deems most important of the Southern Colonies) seems to warrant, he will doubtless be commissioned to make certain representations touching aid and comfort to come from France in the event of united hostilities. I am satisfied that any civilities and respect that may be shown M. the Marquis de la Trouerie will be serviceable to our affairs. His mission is of course secret. I shall inform no one else of this, trusting the information to your whole discretion.

"'I have the Honor to be,

"'Sir,

"'Your most obedient Servant,

"'B. FRANKLIN.

"'Patrick Henry, Esq.,

"'Williamsburg, Virginia.'"

Henry read slowly, without a pause, while the other's eyes did not leave his face; when he had

finished, he looked up with an expression of mingled satisfaction and puzzlement.

"Marquis de la Trouerie!" Colonel Tillotson exclaimed. "Armand's master, then, was the messenger of France! And he is doubtless in Virginia now. But how dares the secretary pose as his master?"

"Because the marquis is dead," fell a heavy voice behind them.

The host got up frowning.

"Captain Jarrat," said he brusquely, "I like not well these soft-footed intrusions. Nor, if I may say it, do I like the dress you wear. Times are come when I no longer welcome a coat of that color in my house."

A smoldering red rose to Jarrat's cheek, but he spoke evenly. "I should beg pardon, Colonel, for an unceremonious intrusion into a conversation. Rashleigh let me in."

"Damn Rashleigh!" said the colonel unmistakably.

"I rode to inquire for Mistress Tillotson," the visitor continued; "but since I am unwelcome, why, I will betake myself home again."

"One moment, Colonel," interposed Henry. "Captain, we spoke of a gentleman as you entered.

May I ask what basis you have for your information?"

Jarrat took out his pocketbook, drew forth a yellow paper and handed it to Henry. "The Marquis de la Trouerie died *en route* to these Colonies and was buried at sea. There is the leaf from the logbook of the Two Sisters recounting the unhappy incident. The news of his death was suppressed in British interests."

"And the secretary?" Henry's voice was calm.

"The incident is now closed, gentlemen, and I violate no confidence. He was bought by the earl —for services."

"My God!" ejaculated Colonel Tillotson. "Are we never to know truth in this world? He was not an impostor and a charlatan. No. He was a British spy!"

"Why, then," interrogated Henry, "did Dunmore expose him?"

"I exposed him."

"You!" the colonel cried.

"I had crossed on the same ship and recognized him at Williamsburg. Discovering the true state of affairs, can you wonder, Colonel Tillotson, at my concern for the intimacy which I saw growing between your niece and this person? I think," he

said, masking a glow-worm gleam in his eyes, "that my feeling for Mistress Tillotson is not misunderstood by you. I knew Lord Dunmore's plan and I could not openly tell you the truth. Is it a wonder I forgot that I was a king's man? I did the one thing left to me. I set afloat such suspicions that the governor, to save his own repute with Williamsburg, was compelled to sacrifice his minion, to himself expose the imposture and to cry himself also deceived. I tell you thus much in confidence. Believe me, sir, I steered the best I knew between the hurt of a lady whom I honor and the governor's displeasure. It was the Scylla of duty and the Charybdis of love. Colonel, I love your niece; and I would not see her suffer humiliation."

Colonel Tillotson rose and paced up and down the floor, plucking at the side-curls of his wig.

"An what you tell us is true," he said, meditating, "I have done you wrong. I am not overkind to your colors, but I have a respect for honest loyalty. God knows 'tis scarce enough. Mayhap I have been unjust. Will you be seated?"

Jarrat sat down, his watchful eyes turning about the room, something strangely like expectancy in them.

The colonel rang for his major-domo.

"Rashleigh," said he soberly, "ask your Mis' Anne to come to the library. And admit no one—no one. Do you hear?"

"Yas, Marsa; yas, *suh!* Nuttin' but er grabeyard ha'nt gwineter git by dat do'!"

"Poor child!" Henry's tone was pitiful. "You mean to tell her? At least wait till your wife is returned."

"The sooner she hears some things the better for her; she has her share of pride. Never fear."

"The day I was last here, sir," observed Jarrat, "she boasted she would wed him an he were a laborer in your fields."

"Aye, maybe, but not if he were a conspirer against her country. My niece is a daughter of Virginia, sir!" And the master of Gladden Hall noisily took snuff to cover his feelings. Henry's face was like a sphinx.

While they waited, came a clatter of hoofs outside; a moment later the hall door was flung open and Rashleigh was heard in excited jabbering. The colonel repeated an objurgation.

The next instant he jumped to his feet and Jarrat started as if at an apparition. Armand stood on the threshold, coarsely dressed, mud-splashed and pale.

The newcomer's look ignored the captain. He bowed to Colonel Tillotson and addressed himself to Henry:

"Monsieur, I come to warn you that a detachment of Dunmore's men is on its way hither from Yorktown to seize your person."

"The devil!" shot out the colonel like a javelin. "I thought the price the earl put on you, Patrick, was but brag. He dares violate my house, then. Mount at once and away by the North road."

Henry's gaze had seemed to dart and play about the young Frenchman's face like yellow summer lightning. "And what would the governor with me this time?"

"To transport you to trial for high treason. It was plotted this day aboard the Fowey."

"From which you are escaped?"

"Yes, Monsieur."

Jarrat's voice entered: "To attack the residence of a Virginian gentleman without crown warrant is not so ready a thing, even for a royal governor; but a man may disappear by night from a lonely road and who to blame? Our fleeing marquis, with his nose for delicate deceits, is a likely cat's-paw. Faugh! I swear such overt folly of Dunmore's will yet drive me into Whiggery!"

Colonel Tillotson paused in perplexity, but Henry

looked at the speaker with a gaze keen and inscrutable as an Indian's above that flickering half-smile of his.

"You have no time to spare, Monsieur. They were to leave the Fowey at sun-down. I implore you to haste."

"As well," cautioned Jarrat, "to go by another way than the marquis anticipates."

"You liar!" said Armand, flaming on him. "This man was in the plot. He waits the troops here at this moment. Monsieur, I beseech . . "

He did not finish, stricken dumb by the entrance of Anne. She had caught her breath at sight of him and stood, statue-like, in the candle-light. Then she held out both arms and ran toward him with a glad cry:

"Louis! They have released you! Oh, thank God! Thank God!"

The young man did not speak; only a little spasm wrenched his features. But Jarrat did. "The jail-bird was slippery, Mistress," he sneered.

The colonel, who had reached her in a stride and pulled her back, dropped her arm at the look of offense and scorn she cast upon the speaker. "Anne!" he said, facing her rigidly. "Listen to me! This man is not only no nobleman—"

"I care naught!" she interrupted wildly. "I

care not who he is! I only know what he is to me!" A light dawned on Armand's face with her words. He drew closer to her, as if wondering, afraid to trust his senses. She turned again to him. "I could not tell you—that night at the Raleigh. I had no time . . "

"But," cried Colonel Tillotson, "he is a spy—a hireling, child, bought to this deception to betray the Colonials!"

"Sooner than that," she declared, "would I believe Captain Jarrat capable of an honest love! This is a lie of your making, Captain. He is no spy. Whatever he has done, 'twas not in dishonor."

"Anne, Anne!" urged her uncle, "we have seen the proofs."

"You do not believe them?" Armand whispered.

"No! No! Nor ever will!"

The young man laughed out triumphantly, in sudden abandon. "You hear that, Messieurs? There is one that believes in me!"

"Believes, aye and loves," cried Anne and ran to him. He drew her close to his breast, murmuring soft words; her face was pale yet burning, her whole body thrilling with passion and defiance.

"They can not destroy my faith in you!" she

breathed; "I shall love and trust you always—always —*always!*"

"She is bewitched," Jarrat said with dry lips.

"You hated him!" she blazed at him. "Oh, I know how you would creep and creep! My friend," turning to Henry—"my friend, do you believe this?"

Henry got up with a round oath. "No!" he swore. "By the Great Day! I do *not* believe it!"

Her fluttering cry of delight was stilled by Colonel Tillotson's tense whisper, "Hark!" There was a dull drum of hoofs thudding over sod and with it Sweetlips' fierce challenge.

Simultaneously came a wail of terror from the kitchens and Rashleigh plunged in from the hall, his woolly head shaking with fear.

"De sojers! De sojers!" he screeched. "Mars' John, dee gwine kill y'all!"

Jarrat rose to his feet. "You know how I can creep and creep, Mistress?" he said. "Well then, now you shall see how I can strike!"

Anne had rushed instantly to the window and drawn the blind. "Troopers!" she cried. "The house is being surounded! You have been pursued, Louis!"

"'Twas true then!" frothed Colonel Tillotson. "Jarrat, had I a weapon, I would shoot you, I swear to God! There is one way, Patrick. Here, quick!

Through this hall and to the buttery. There is a small window. Speed, and God send you get safe away!"

As Henry disappeared, Jarrat ran from the door, shouting directions to the soldiery.

"Louis!" gasped Anne. "You must go! Take the same way, quick!"

"Wait!" he said. "I must give something into your care—something important—I dare not risk their finding it a second time! Promise me you will do with it what I ask."

"Yes, yes, but haste!—haste!"

He had taken a packet from his breast. "This. Much depends upon it. It must be carried to Philadelphia, and there given to Doctor Benjamin Franklin. You must tell him to hold it till called for."

"I will carry it. He shall have it from my own hands. I hear them on the porch! For my sake, go!"

"Swear to me!"

"I swear by all I love—by my love for you."

"And you will trust me?"

"Always, always! Oh, can you wait while they take you?"

"Kiss me!"

"Ah . . "

He strained her to him once and sprang toward the door through which Henry had fled. But as he reached it, Jarrat's form stood framed in the sash. His hand held a pistol. At the same moment, the room overflowed with men.

"So-ho," he smiled redly over white teeth. "Not so sprightly, eh? Well, the other bird has flown—curse those horses' pounding!—and we must be content with you, I suppose. Lieutenant, I put this conger-eel in your care. An he gets off as did Patrick Henry, some one shall suffer for it! Nay, Mistress, run not to him! Rather give me the packet which the entertaining gentleman gave into your care a moment since. I doubt not its contents will interest us all. It may even hold his patent of nobility."

Anne's hands flew to her breast and she shrank back as Jarrat advanced upon her.

"You ruffian!" raged Colonel Tillotson, beside himself with anger, "an you or your bloody-backs lay finger on my niece . . "

"Heroics are misplaced, Colonel," answered Jarrat, curtly. "Will you give up that paper, Mistress?"

A quick light came to the girl's eyes, gazing past him. Fumbling in her dress, she drew forth the packet and held it out. But as he extended an arm to seize it, she drew back and hurled it over his head,

through the dining-room door, where huddled Mammy Evaline and the rest of the kitchen servants in a shivering group.

"Bonella!" she screamed. "Take it, Bonella!—run! Hide it! Run!" The redemptioner woman swooped upon the packet and was away like a hare.

"Clumsy fools!" foamed Jarrat as the soldiers bungled at the door-catch. "After her and bring her here!"

Anne, in the reaction, felt her gaze upon Armand, erect between the soldiers, swim with tears. How could he stand so calm! And with the thought she felt a sudden shame for her weakness.

"The wench has had her run," grumbled one of the soldiers, as they returned with the redemptioner woman. "She hasn't it on her. She's tucked it away somewhere."

"I'll soon know where she's hidden it," stormed Jarrat. He interrogated her savagely. "No," she said brokenly, "I not tell."

"Get a raw-hide from the stables and stretch her out there; she'll talk fast enough!"

"You'll not lash her!" cried Anne with trembling lips.

Jarrat made no reply. When the soldier returned with the raw-hide, others dragged the woman into the center and stood waiting. The poor creature

watched the preparations with her face ashen and her black eyes darting rapidly here and there.

"Now," said Jarrat, menacingly, "will you show where you hid that paper?" She was dumb.

Once, twice, the heavy thong descended. At the first stroke she cowered and cried out with pain. At the second a line of red started through the coarse oznabrig.

Jarrat leaned and looked into her face. "I not tell you!" she wavered.

"I'll have the king's law on you for this," the colonel hurled between his teeth.

Armand had remained quiet, but as the stroke fell twice again, he trembled. The woman's lips were tight together. "No! No! No!" she said between them. "I not tell you! I not tell you —never!"

"Damn her!" Jarrat gnashed furiously. "Lay on, there, you! I say I'll have it out of her!"

The wielder of the raw-hide paused to tuck up his sleeve. The men who held her relaxed their hold for an instant and she sank down on the floor with closed eyes.

"They will kill her!" sobbed Anne, clutching her uncle's arm. "They will kill her!"

"Stand her up again," commanded Jarrat.

Armand had grown very white. At Anne's sob,

he strained forward in the grasp of the soldiers and cried: "Tell him! I command you to tell him!"

The woman opened her eyes, looked at him searchingly and uncertainly, then smiled and tried to shake her head. "I . . not . . tell."

They dragged her roughly up again, but her legs would not support her. She seemed not to hear Jarrat's shouted question in her ear. He looked at her swaying figure a moment, then in a smother of rage, raised his pistol butt and brought it down heavily on her temple. She fell like a log and he turned on his heel cursing.

"Let the drab go," he said sullenly, "and bring along the other."

They mounted, a trooper hitching bridles with Armand's horse, and as Jarrat gave the word, they moved off in twos down the dark drive. The light from the open door fell on the trampled shrubbery, the glossy spattered skins of the horses and on Armand's backward turned face.

"Farewell, Mademoiselle."

Anne slipped from the colonel's arms and sped after them. "Louis!" she called clearly. "Remember! I believe! I trust—and—I love you!"

"God keep you always!" he responded, and as they swept into the black, she saw Jarrat ride close and strike him across the mouth with his gloved hand.

CHAPTER XVII

IN THE BALANCE

Philadelphia City a little before midsummer, 1776.

The old Quaker quiet is gone. The sober thrift is there, the hot sun glints from the roofs of the squat ware-houses and from the black and glazed brick of the trim, two-storied dwellings. Still surrounding it are the forested hills, pricked out with country-seats. The shady lanes still wind down, smelling of cows, and the small, muddy creeks still run sluggishly across the town.

But only in these things is it the same it has been in the days of its provincial governors.

Now a strange spirit of excitement pervades it—a subtle electricity that touches all things with expectancy. The tow-clad German farmers, who have been used to smoke their pipes stolidly in the market-place, now gather by their yellow-topped wagons to talk of General Washington's hungry Continentals, and the black slaves that crowd the wide clean kitchens gabble furtively of the fatted Hessians of Lord Howe. All is a-buzz—all save the

little Town Hall from whose gable-ends gray pigeons lift like rimpled smoke as though wondering at the unwonted quiet of the pillory and whipping-post beside it

The ball which Patrick Henry started at old St. John's Church, in Richmond, Virginia, has gone on rolling faster and faster among the people and now, in the old Quaker city, the long-smoldering heat has gathered into focus. The very vernacular has changed. The old names are gone. The "Friends of America" and the "Liberals" are now called Whigs. The softer "Constitutionalist," "Ministerialist," "Conservative" are plain Tories. And between Tory and Whig there is a great gulf fixed.

The shops are open; and their Quaker owners sit talking on the broad stoops, gazing frowningly upon the new tumult which has brought French officers gay with gallantry to dazzle their daughters with crimson and purple, which sounds drums to fire their smock-shirted 'prentice lads to sinful rebellion and to drilling on the Northern Liberties, and which has anchored a fleet of new privateers, floating a rattlesnake flag, in the silver Delaware at their feet.

Beside them sit their wives and daughters, some rosy, with rebel side-curls and wicked double-tints of hair. The dress of all is a single color tone—gray, blent of drab and black—with here and there,

accidental notes, a fold of paler neckerchief, a glimmer of lace, a spot of ribbon. But there are no hoop petticoats, no plaits in caps and pinners, no red-heeled shoes nor fans.

They sit demurely, though with eyes that sparkle with more eager interest. They have not to solve the grave problem that troubles their husbands and brothers; for even among these men of peace there are those who doubt, and more than one, a little later, is to don buff and blue in the Continental line and brave social ostracism in the Free Society of stanch Samuel Wetherill.

The inns—the Black Boar and Indian Queen and the London Coffee House—dilate with tap-room wiseacres, and crowds of townfolk loiter along the streets in the warm evenings to view the great men come to attend the most honorable Congress, sitting in the State House. They have seen the Charles-town packet bring the delegates from South Carolina. Every citizen who can muster a horse has ridden out to meet the delegates from Virginia, Maryland and Delaware who arrived in a body. They have seen them all, have compared them with one another.

On High Street stands the great mansion of Richard Penn, one of the Proprietaries. It is now thrown open for the entertainment of the visitors.

Up and down the dusty street pass and repass earnest men in dull coats and small clothes, workmen in oznabrig and leathern aprons and tradesmen in coarse cloth. They pause in knots on the pave and talk, each by his kind.

One house they pass many times, looking at it with more eager curiosity and concern. This building is even less pretentious than its fellows, but one who observes it long will have noted that those who pass in and out of its door lend it a peculiar distinction. They come in velvet instead of cloth, their sleeves droop with lace; they wear powdered hair and diamond buckles, and for the most part carry dress swords.

The house is occupied as a shop and the silver plate on the door bears the name of "James Randolph." It is the headquarters of the Virginia delegations.

To Henry, chafing in his Virginia harness, how slowly the ball had rolled among the conventions! How halting went the leaders! Messengers riding post-haste, brought him the news from Philadelphia.

Congress had recommended that the several Colonies form distinct governments for themselves. And even to this the delegates of New York and Pennsylvania had loud objection. Henry gnashed his teeth in the Convention at Williamsburg and on

May fifteenth, a resolution was passed directing the Virginia delegates in Philadelphia to "declare the *United* Colonies free and independent states."

A significant word! Richard Henry Lee followed in June with his resolution for independence.

But alas for human failing! Many of the delegates—Dickinson, Morris, Livingston—were men of property. And the possession of property enlarges the bump of caution. They cried for delay. The older Quakers, men of peace, had set their faces and their faith against rebellion.

New York was milk and water; there had been the failure of the Canadian expedition, and besides, the province had its exposed harbor and the Indian raids on its frontier to think of. The Pennsylvania delegation refused to vote on separation and left their seats in anger. Maryland had few grievances.

And what of New Jersey? There was Toryism entrenched. Its royal governor, the son of the benevolent-faced patriot, Benjamin Franklin, went breathing fire against the Whigs; not till he had been shipped to Connecticut in irons, not till Congress had sent three of its members to argue, to plead, to storm, did its Assembly declare for freedom.

Think not that those who hesitated were not men of honor, jealous for the welfare of their country. Not every one believed George III another such a

despot as Philip II of Spain or the bloody-minded man the radicals illiberally called him. The storm was high on the horizon. And it is the part of wisdom to count well the cost of desperate ventures. Against the Colonies was pitted the mistress of the seas—a king, innumerable battalions, armament, navies, money and the prestige of hereditary possession. The Colonies stood alone.

There were those who, like Henry, whose clear eye saw the future as with divination, pinned faith upon Gallic enmity to England and looked for a sign of aid. But the months came and went without its appearance. Now the third Congress was sitting and France was silent. Granted a defiance to Great Britain, the outcome was doubtful—how doubtful, five red years of smoke and blood were to demonstrate.

As the pendulum vibrated a British fleet in the Delaware brought the war within hearing, and Lord Howe hove to off Sandy Hook with all his army.

The Congress was, after all, a miniature of the country. It held a Tory party who awaited some disaster to become dangerous. It held faint hearts who croaked, despondent ones who predicted ruin, and brave hearts that dared a struggle they believed would be uncertain.

On such a field, for twenty-five long days, a deter-

mined battle was fought. It ended at last, and one evening Thomas Jefferson, of Virginia, betook himself to a little house back of an oblong green, where lived Doctor Franklin, and wrote the first draft of the Declaration of Independence.

There comes a time in the history of every great movement when it must go forward or die. Lethargy breeds reaction. The fierce fight for a Declaration had marked this point now. In the three days since the vote the opposition had gathered its shattered forces. There were new mutterings and the little Virginian delegation in the shop of Mr. James Randolph, on High Street, knew that the defiance which was to be offered on the morrow, if it were to be signed at all, must be signed quickly.

So, out of a humid morning, grew the afternoon of the third of July for Philadelphia. It came in heat, with a brazen sky.

Opposite Mr. Randolph's shop, on the same evening, Joseph Galloway, the lawyer, walking slowly, paused and looked across the street. He was thick-set and middle-aged, with a smooth, crafty face and restless eyes.

He had lacked Whig patriotism in the first Congress. The second would have none of him. And yet he had earlier led the popular party against the

proprietary! Such strange overturnings the new idea of freedom was bringing about! The fierce Tory rancor which had made of this man at first "the defender of the prerogative" was to convert him later into a spy, a refugee and a sour pensioner of George III.

Now there was the open hatred of a bitter Tory in the look Joseph Galloway cast upon the little shop.

"Good day, Mordecai," he said in greeting to a rotund merchant Quaker who joined him. "I see you also looking. What think you our Virginia hot-bloods will brew next in their den yonder?"

The Quaker frowned. "I love them not," he answered. "What saith the Scriptures? 'For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds.'"

"Gentlemen of birth and wealth, forsooth," continued Galloway angrily, "and yet prating like the veriest clouts, of independence and brotherhood! Whose was the bill to separate from Great Britain? Richard Henry Lee's. And who has written the Declaration that is to be thrust beneath the delegates' noses to-morrow? Thomas Jefferson. These Virginians! Would we had never heard of Virginia before we came to this!

"Look you"—he broke off and pointed with his

stick where a coach bowled along High Street. It was richly furnished and bore arms on its panels. On the cushions, exquisitely dressed in a white uniform, sat a blocky, military-looking man with bushy wig and foreign mustachios. He wore a cocked hat.

"'Tis Monsieur Pliarne," said the Quaker. "These French parasites with powder to peddle, friend Joseph, would joy to see the Colonies plunged into bloody strife. They would batten on our extremity. 'For wheresoever the carcass is, there the eagles be gathered together.'"

"French officers!" ejaculated Galloway. "Aye, or adventurers! As like to be one as another. Mayhap Monsieur Pliarne goes to see the precious envoy, whose new-coming the town gapes about."

"He is to be received?"

"To-morrow afternoon. 'Tis an open secret. Notice was sent the House this morning."

"'Twas averred in the street but now that he is come from Louis the Sixteenth."

"Let them jabber!" grumbled Galloway. "Little store is to be set by these fine envoys. I mind me when the Frenchman came to the Congress last November. You heard of that, mayhap. There was the same excitement—a committee appointed, too, I remember. John Jay was upon it. They met the personage in a room in Carpenter's Hall, and

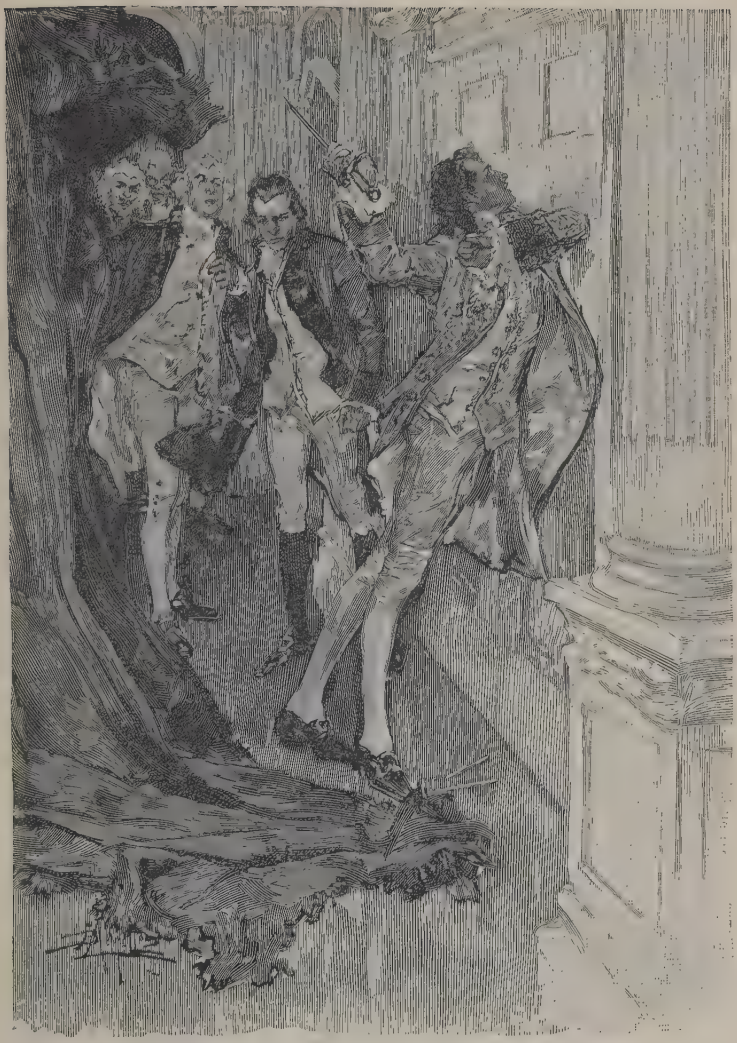
what think you they found? Why, a little old frog-eater with a club-foot, who, when they asked him for his authority, drew his hand across his throat, and says he: 'Gentlemen, I shall take care of my head!' That was all they could get out of him. Some imbecile belike. And even then there were those who saw great signs in it. A pest on all such, say I!"

The Quaker shook his head doubtfully. "Yet there is much hoped for from this present message," he said. "I heard it on good authority some months ago that a French marquis was to come hither. 'Twas said Benjamin Franklin had wrote of the matter from London. Mayhap this is the same."

"Bosh!" sniffed Galloway. "'Tis absurd, I say, the faith that is put in such a vain and empty hope! I do know that half the delegates have some such folly in their heads. The Declaration is to be offered for signing to-morrow, and look you, it is in the minds of some members to retard action upon it, hoping such a message from France may bolster faint hearts."

"Thou dost not think they will sign, then?"

"God forbid!" rejoined Galloway, fervently. "I can not believe we are so near madness as that. And yet I would that naught had been heard of a



message from France. Methinks to-morrow will be warm. Goodnight to you, Mordecai."

As the two friends talked, the chimes had clangored from Christ Church, and just as the tones sounded, a stout-trunched old man with a shrewd, simple face under a broad hat, lifted the latch of a near-by gate which barred an oblong green yard from the street.

Therein, under a mulberry tree, where yellow cabbage-butterflies went kissing wings, a chubby woman was sitting by a table whereon stood some books and a glass bottle containing a two-headed snake in spirits. Two tousled children rolled and romped unheeded underfoot. The film of twilight was falling from a cooling sky.

"You are late, father," the woman said as the old man greeted her. "Supper is almost ready. Young Mr. Jefferson has sent word that he will be here this evening. I do hope," she added good-naturedly, "that you won't sit up all night again over that tiresome paper he is writing. Laws! One would think it had been a real speech."

She ran to fetch a dish of tea, and her father sat down in his chair and took off his hat. His head was bald, with a fringe of white hair. He was mopping his forehead with a large kerchief when she returned with the tea.

"Bless me," she said, as the gate clicked, "here is some one to see you already. A young man and handsome," she whispered, as he came nearer, "but how pale!" It was Armand.

"Is this Doctor Franklin?" he inquired.

"It is."

"Sir," said Armand, "a packet was given secretly into your hands to hold for me, sometime since, sealed with a red seal bearing four lances."

Doctor Franklin drew his brows together with a glance of surprise and shook his head.

"Surely you have received it?"

There was a curious rigor of anxiety in the tone that caused Doctor Franklin to glance sharply at his questioner. The scrutiny satisfied him, for the look of suspicion that had been stiffened by the strenuous times faded into his habitual benevolence.

"I recall none such," he answered gravely. "What name did it bear?"

"It bore no name." The tone shook now with a confusion of apprehension.

"I fear that is all the more reason that I could not have forgot it. These are troublous days, sir, and faith not always to be relied upon. To whom did you entrust this document?"

Something like fear had come into the other's

eyes, and Doctor Franklin for the first time noted with concern his agitation and pallor.

"To a young lady of Virginia."

"I am sorry, sir, deeply sorry," said the old man, "but no such packet has been put into my hands at any time."

"Poor young man!" sighed the motherly woman a few minutes later, as she set the table for supper. "What think you could have been in it, father? He looked as if it had meant life or death to him."

Armand walked slowly through several side-streets to the Red Lion Tavern on Sassafras Street, one of the less pretentious inns. Here, in a dim parlor on the ground floor, waited the occupant of the fine coach which had roused the spleen of Joseph Galloway; his hat was flung on a chair and he strode up and down, his mustachios bristling with impatience.

As Armand entered he embraced him effusively in the French fashion.

"All goes well," he cried. "I have been discreet and have done all you instructed. The Congress has named three members to receive you to-morrow at one o'clock. *Ventrebleu!* With the Declaration hanging fire, you may believe how eager they are!

I have brought your clothes, too. *Nom de Dieu!*" he exclaimed, holding Armand's arms affectionately. "To know you were in a British prison! Thank God you escaped their clutches, and just in the nick of time, too! You shall tell me about it one day."

"Pliarne!" Armand broke in upon the other's chatter. "Pliarne! . . . The letter! I have not got it."

"Not got it?" Pliarne repeated in amazed surprise.

"No; I sent it here to Philadelphia to Doctor Franklin. I did not tell you this, since I expected to find it here. Well, I have seen Doctor Franklin, and it has not been delivered."

Pliarne's face was a study of dismay. "And what will you do?"

Armand had no time to reply, for at that moment there came a knock at the door and it opened.

Instantly Pliarne bent low in a series of bows to Armand.

"Accept my most profound salutations, Monseigneur," he said in tones of elaborate ceremony. "I shall be pleased to accompany you on your distinguished errand to-morrow afternoon."

"Monsieur Pliarne," said Armand easily, "this is my good friend, Captain Jarrat. *Au revoir,* Monsieur—*jusqu'au matin!*"

CHAPTER XVIII

FOR LIFE OR FOR HONOR.

More than one along the south road, that sultry morning of July Fourth, turned to gaze after a fair-haired girl who passed upon a lead-white horse with a negro boy behind her a-stride a sorrel. Yellow dust splotched Anne's olive cloak as she rode into the town, and yellow dust clung to John-the-Baptist's wool.

How many leagues! She would have been worn but for the purpose that buoyed her up. She rode some way, paying as little heed to the sparse groups along the streets or to the few painted Indians lounging with their peltry in the squares as to the beetle-browed roofs or the wooden statuary in the pretentious yards.

Her thoughts were busy with the past—they flew back to that night at Gladden Hall, her last view of Armand, when Jarrat's troopers had dragged him away; to the flight of Dunmore and his family, his wanton burning of Norfolk with his rabble of

runaway slaves, and the last fight at Gwyn's Island whence the impotent earl, with his brutal aide, Captain Foy, sailed away to the North, never again to set foot upon Virginian soil; to her anguished wonder as to Armand's fate meanwhile. Even Henry's return from the second Congress, the news that Colonel Washington had been elected Commander-in-Chief of Colonial forces and the glorious outcome of his long siege of Boston had not been able to cheer her.

She thought of the long hours she had watched by the bedside of the bondwoman with grave-faced Doctor Craik, watching her slow return to life. Of the still longer days when she had sat by the listless figure who only stared leaden-eyed and with brain piteously dulled, to hear asked over and over again with desperate earnestness that same question—"Where is it? *Can't* you remember?"—a question met always with the same result. Of the long, fruitless search, the unreasoning faith in him that would not yield to recital or argument, and finally the lucky accident which had given her the clue to the packet's hiding-place.

She had started the self-same day, taking John-the-Baptist with her, leaving a hurried message for her uncle and aunt, who were then away in Richmond. And this, the twelfth day thereafter, found

her at her journey's end, riding into the wide, clean thoroughfares of Philadelphia.

"Mis' Anne—" John-the-Baptist's solemn drawl broke her reverie. "Dat yaller boy at de place whar we stayed las' night say dee gwinter mek ev'ybody ekal. Do dat mean we niggers gwineter be white, lak you, or is y'all gwinter be black lak me?"

But Anne had no answer.

Going toward High Street, her course lay by the open green on which the new State House fronted. She noticed that the pavements were almost deserted, and found herself thinking wonderingly that the streets of Richmond were noisier.

It was with a start of surprise that, on turning a corner by the green, she pulled up without warning on the skirts of a great hushed crowd, well ordered, moving restlessly, under trees that shrilled with locusts.

Most of those nearer the front were gentry. They walked back and forth slowly, trampling the blue thistles and whortleberry bushes. Next them was a stratum of the trading and working classes. No wonder the wealthier merchants jeered them, for they wore trousers of coarse drill, even leather jerkins; and some carried tools. Here was a group of weavers from German-town, and not far away a

knot of Swedes from Wicacoa. The older men among these wore leggings and skin coats.

On the outskirts of all, here and there, holding themselves aloof, walked statelier, heavier figures in small-clothes of rich velvets and satins and wearing powdered wigs.

They carried irritable looks, these "Pennsylvania lords," as the bitter Adams called them. It was bad weather for Tories. From the yard of Clarke's Inn, across the street, they looked askance at the workmen, passing sneering allusions to the representatives from Massachusetts, angered at the assumption of legislative powers by men clearly of more humble blood than themselves.

They saw the cannon in position by the State House and the Continental flags fluttering from the shipping in the harbor. They knew that in the near-by woods five battalions of Associators, drilled and armed, were awaiting any outcome. They knew that the People were ready—if only their leaders should choose.

Anne, upon her tired horse, looked with wonder at this earnest, quiet crowd and thrilled with a new sense of the dignity of the assemblage within those brick walls. The heat was simmering, and she had thrown open the thin cloak she wore, showing a flash of crimson waist with a sheen of metal buttons.

Mordecai Floyd, looking on near-by, gazed on her with pursed lips.

"Small wonder," he said grimly, "that unrighteousness doth overwhelm the children of the world and move them to wrath, when we see all about us the testimony of undenial. Lust of the eye, friend Joseph! Lust of the eye!"

Joseph Galloway, standing by him, looked at the girl, so straight and young and bright-hued; then his crafty look returned. "Consider the lilies of the field," he quoted with unction, as he took snuff.

"I doubt not," pursued the Quaker, wagging his pow, "'twas designed to cast a slur upon the vanity of apparel, since 'tis a thing of so little estimation in the sight of God that He bestows it in the highest degree upon the meanest of His creatures. 'Tis to be presumed that, were it a thing of worth in itself, instead of bestowing colors, gildings, and broideries upon tulips, He had bestowed them upon creatures of higher dignity. To mankind He hath given but sparingly of gaudy features; a great part of them being black, a great part of them being tawny, and a great part being of other wan and dusky complexions—showing that 'tis not the outward adornment that He wishes, but the appearing in supplication for the ornamenting of the Spirit."

"Even Solomon, in all his glory, was not arrayed

like one of these!" intoned his companion smoothly. "But I must be going, Mordecai. I have an errand at the tavern."

"Hast thou heard aught more of the message to the Congress from France?" the Quaker inquired in a low voice, as he clasped the other's fervid palm.

Galloway put his lips closer to the other's ear, and a glutinous chuckle shook his jowl.

"Mordecai," he said, "I dreamed last night that France had an ax to grind. Wouldn't it be curious if the message didn't tickle the Congress so much after all? Ho-ho!"

Anne's first inquiry provoked a smile from the bystanders. Doctor Franklin? Yes, he was doubtless in the Hall, but to see him! Quite impossible! And a lady, too. At a recess she might succeed, but not now. Who could tell but he was on the floor at that moment?

So she rode on. At High Street she inquired for an inn, as she had been in the saddle since dawn and the horses were jaded. Learning that the principal ones were all full, owing to the presence of the delegates, she found her way to one of the more humble hostelries on another street. It was the Red Lion Tavern.

The place seemed well-nigh deserted; had she known the significance of this day's sitting of the

Congress, she would have understood. As it was, finding no host in evidence, she went into the parlor and sat down to await his appearance.

And sitting so, from the hall, and coming nearer, she heard the well-remembered voice of Jarrat.

A panic seized her. The packet—it was in the lining of her cloak at that moment. He must not see her! She looked wildly about her, but there was no door of escape. In desperation she ran to the deep-set window. It was shut, but there were shalloon curtains across the alcove, and she shrank behind them as the door flew open.

Jarrat came in noisily; one of the inn servants was at his heels.

"I would speak with Monsiegneur," he said. "Request him to be so good as to honor me here." He stood smiling redly as the servant went, and Anne watched him from between the curtains with fascinated gaze.

"At last!" he muttered; "the final stroke, and still all goes well. If Armand succeeds for us, then advancement and favor for me. The king must reward me, for the plan was mine alone."

"Armand!" Anne's heart had given a great leap. Jarrat knew where he was—what he did. "If he succeeds for us"—what meant those strange words?

Again a step in the hall, again the door opened,

a scraping servant said, "Monseigneur," and again Anne's heart leaped; for the man who stood on the threshold, clad in a full costume of purple velvet, was Armand. Armand, but sparer of feature, with shadows beneath the eyes. Yet they looked out with all their old nobility and with a strange fire. She knew now where she had seen that fire—it was in Henry's face—the fire of steadfast purpose that knows no quenching.

Armand! Escaped from Dunmore's clutches, safe and in Philadelphia! She wanted to rush out to him, to cry to him that she had done the best she could, had come to fulfill her promise at last. But what did he with Jarrat?

"So!" the latter said, "as bravely trimmed as ever. 'Tis the dress of a prince."

"My good Pliarne has the best of taste." On Armand's face was a strange smile.

"You have cozened him beautifully. I doubt not he expects reimbursement from his king."

"*My* king," corrected Armand softly.

"Keep it up," laughed Jarrat. "'Tis never forgetting makes a good play-actor. Faith, it minds me of the old Virginia days. Then you posed as only a marquis. We rise in the world. Yesterday —in a prison cell at Halifax; to-day—this little plan, release, and presto! behold Louis's secret

envoy. Well, you are near to the purchase of your pardon. The time is almost here. A half-hour more and you will enter the State House. You lack not assurance. Here is the letter you will deliver to the Congress."

Armand took the paper he handed him and put it in his breast.

"'Tis signed with De Vergennes' name, of course," went on Jarrat, "and 'tis a clever enough forgery to trick even Poor Richard for the time being. Aid in return for territorial compensation . . now if 'twere only Louis Fifteenth! 'Twould be like the old skinflint. Methinks 'twill be a wet-blanket to allay this fever for a Declaration. 'Twill suffice to tide over till these patriot addle-pates come to their senses."

Anne's mind was in a clamor—a hideous, unmeaning clamor of surprises, from which a single fact stood out with the clearness of a black silhouette etched on white paper. Armand, not escaped, but released—released—going before the Congress with a lying message—a message of discouragement—going now, this very hour, and the plot was Jarrat's.

It was for a single heart-beat as if the sun were darkened, as if all joy were blotted from the universe. Then, peering out, she saw his eyes, and the bitter

scene at Gladden Hall rose to her like a vision. She saw him dragged away, and with the vision she felt, strong, triumphant, the terrible, joyful rebellion of her own belief in him that would not doubt.

"I could not have devised it better myself"—Jarrat was speaking again. "There is not a soul in Congress who could recognize you as the Louis Armand seized at Williamsburg. Luckily, Henry is in the Virginia Convention. The devil holds cards with us."

"And this," said Armand, as if to himself, "has been the devil's deal."

"Aye. But 'tis time for us to start; Pliarne will be there by now." He consulted his watch. "Ten minutes to ride thither. I have horses at the door. I shall go with you as one of your suite. Luckily, I shall not be known. I must not miss the delight of recounting this interesting event in detail, in Virginia. Can you guess," with a malign smile, "to whom in especial, Monseigneur?"

A red flush leaped into Armand's cheek and his teeth clenched convulsively. It was as if a great wave of passion lashed the man and left him tense and white. His tone, however, remained as low as ever.

"You hound!" he said. "You prowling wolf of the dark! who know no truth, no trust, no faith!

who, being vile, think all else vile the same. Thank God that to that one . . to her . . my honor was always unstained. She believe you? No! Never! I go alone to the Congress—you go no farther with me!"

A facial contortion drew Jarrat's lips from his teeth. He stood in a leaning posture, his knuckles flat upon the table between them, a thriving suspicion in his look. A fit of shuddering seized Anne as she saw this look change swiftly to conviction—certainty in which rage and shame and hate were black.

"I go no farther?" he repeated. "What say you? Oh, fool . . . fool that I was to trust you! You have tricked me! You never intended to do it! You will not go!—Aye, you would go, but wherefore?" His voice had sunk to a metallic dulness, and he eyed the other, breathing hard.

Now his tone leaped again: "I know! The French king had his own mind! He sent your master a message to convey . . . a message of comfort. Ah! your face says 'aye'! 'Twas in the packet you gave to Mistress Tillotson at Gladden Hall! Damn that bondwoman! You have got it! Now that you are false to us, 'tis that message—that message that you would give the Congress! And 'twas I brought you from the jail . . . I!"

The last words were a sort of horrible rasping whisper, and as he spoke he came slowly around the table, his fingers clawing its edge.

"But you shall not! You double traitor! You shall not go! I know you—I alone! I will prevent it."

"You shall never leave this room," said Armand.

Crouched low, holding the shalloon edges, Anne saw it all, the breath frozen in her throat—saw both blades clang out with a single movement—saw Jarrat hurl himself forward—heard the steel meet. Mixed joy and horror held her.

She understood; he had cherished his master's purpose all along—pursued by treachery, meeting cunning with cunning, constrained to deception. It was the true message of the French king that she clasped at that moment under her cloak. To carry this he had won his way from the hands of his enemies and fooled Jarrat to his purpose. And now without the packet, his voice would give the message to the Congress. She had brought it just in time.

All this came to her at once, in a succession of pictures vivid as patches of night landscape seen by violet lightning, and at an instant when horror overrolled her joy.

The street, the tap-room were so near; would none

come to stop them? She feared to declare herself, for a start, a tremor of the hand, might mean death to her lover.

She saw the quick end, powerless to utter a cry. Armand stiffened suddenly, his left hand fallen low; his blade passed like a needle in sailcloth, through the other's body, and Jarrat slipped in a huddle to the floor and lay still.

Anne tried to scream, but her throat only gave forth a whisper. Not till Armand had sheathed his wet sword and the door had closed upon him, did she find strength to part the curtains.

She looked upon the prostrate man in a terror. She must summon help and then take the packet to Armand. She realized suddenly that Jarrat was not dead—that his eyes were upon her—that he was struggling to a sitting posture.

"You saw . . you heard," he gasped. "You!"

"Yes," she breathed.

"You brought him the packet! My God—to think I never suspected! And he has gone—gone—"

"To his honor."

He stared at her, a slow, ghastly smile coming to wreathe his lips. "Honor? Say you so? Wait."

He made an attempt to unbutton his waistcoat. "The paper in this pocket," he groaned. "Take it

and read. Quick! Quick! Nay, call no one! Men bleed not to death so soon."

She unfolded the scroll with shaking fingers and read:

"I, Louis Armand, released from durance in Halifax, under special instruction from his Majesty's Government touching the Continental Congress, do agree that, in the event that I do not carry out this mission, *as ordered,* I hold my life forfeit and pledge my honor within one month this hereafter to deliver myself to Lord Chetwynde, whose custody I now leave.

"(Signed) ARMAND."

She caught her breath. "Do pledge my honor to deliver myself"—"to hold my life forfeit." He had chosen to give his life to carry the true message. His life! How dear that was to her! He must not do it! Oh, if God would only help her to think. He must not do it! She heard Jarrat's breathing through it all. and felt his eyes, filming, upon her.

A heavy knocking came at the door, and Joseph Galloway entered, his stick in his hand. He made an exclamation as he saw, and threw up his hands.

"Galloway!" said the wounded man, his breath rattling with a convulsion as the other bent over

him. "He is false to us. Armand—he is false as hell! He—did this. He is gone to the Congress. You must stop him!"

"Yes, yes. I will call a leech. 'Tis not a mortal thrust, man. I will go to the Hall. But how to do it? Proofs—"

"She . . . " gasped Jarrat, in a final effort, pointing to Anne. "She . . " and lapsed into ashen unconsciousness.

CHAPTER XIX

THE GREAT SUNDERING

The white-walled, high-ceiled ante-room was barely furnished with paduasoy chairs and a small slim-legged table. A high desk used betimes by the Colony's Chief Justice of the Supreme Court was at one end, with doors on either side; the other end of the room opened in narrow arches between pillars, into the wide-paved hall of the State House. Across these pillars was stretched a heavy cloth curtain, through whose folds sounds from the corridor reached dull and muffled.

Beyond these curtains, on the opposite side of the hall, was a great double-door, and through the heavy oak came voices in debate and an occasional high note, like the metallic rap of a gavel. But in the ante-room this became only a distant hum like that of settling bees.

Armand, clad as for a court levee, stood one side erect and smiling before a trio of sober-coated fig-

ures in duffle gray. His long, brown, rippling hair, the rare lace at his throat, the jade hilt of his dress-sword, made him as distinct as some brilliant-hued insect among gray moths. Beside him, uniformed, his mustachios aggressive as ever, short, wiry and alert, stood Pliarne.

The sober-coated gentlemen, the delegates appointed to meet the secret messenger to the Congress, had made their bows to the great man, all but Dickinson, their leader, openly radiant with the presumed bearing of his mission. Monsieur Pliarne's proposals for ammunition purchases had recently been considered in committee, and the announcement of the envoy's arrival, coming from him, a known agent of France, had carried a weight added to by the appearance of the man before them. He had arrived a little late—a deliberateness that accorded well with the sobriety of his errand.

Now they but waited a pause in the debate to throw wide the doors that opened to the floor.

On the other side of those doors rages what is to be the last agitated hour of the fight. The document that is to be the birth-certificate of a nation lies upon the table. Since early morning the discussion has been bitter.

Well for the hundreds who so anxiously wait in the sunny streets and crowd the green outside that

this document is to come to them softened, as a grave deliberation, when time and distance have smoothed its roughnesses.

It would not have profited them to see the strenuous Adams balk at the word "tyrant," believing George III rather a man deceived. To hear the learned Witherspoon rage because of a reference to the Scotch people. To see North Carolina delegates protest against the arraignment of the king for forcing upon the Colonies the African slave trade. To hear Tory ridicule, unashamed, assail a leaf of immortality!

What did the evil tongues not say, indeed? "A plagiarism from Locke's treatise on Government"—"its phrasing stolen from a tragi-comedy of Aphra Behn's"—"an imitation of Chief Justice Drayton's Charge to the Grand Jury of Charles-town"—"a jumble of hackneyed ideas composed by James Otis in one of his lucid intervals."

And back of all in this struggle, beneath the ardor of both sides, now that the fierceness was cooling, lay waiting, hesitant, the inevitable, silent but all-powerful minority who waver and—decide.

The insect hum ceased suddenly. There was a forward movement of the group in the ante-room toward the curtains.

"Stop!" echoed an intense voice behind them;

"stop!" Joseph Galloway stepped into the room from one of the side entrances and closed the door.

"Praise the Most High," he ejaculated, "that I am come in time! Gentlemen, as you would save the Congress from a most shameful scandal, let not that man pass from this room!"

There was a murmur of angry amazement from the group. Armand's hand dropped to his side. His face had whitened, and Pliarne's mustachios worked alarmingly.

"Sir," interposed Dickinson sternly, "we receive here a legate of France."

"You receive an impostor, a villain and a spy."

Pliarne's hand went to his sword, but Dickinson stepped before him, while the others stood stock-still, blankness in their bearing.

"An insult!" cried the former. "And to the very face of Monseigneur! Gentlemen, you have cause enough to know the politics of this meddler who has forced his way into this presence."

"I am an honest man," retorted Galloway. "My errand here should demonstrate that. And what I say, I prove."

"I know not whether we should listen, sir," said Dickinson, his brows together. "Heaven forbid that we should affront such a guest! Yet—the words you have uttered demand, for his Excellency's satis-

faction at least, an explanation. In his name, then, speak, but quickly and begone." Dickinson was a diplomat.

"I shall be brief," returned Galloway. "This man, whom you believe a French nobleman, is Louis Armand, an adventurer lately arrested in Virginia, now in the secret service of the British. The message he bears is a forgery conveying the offer of aid only on impossible conditions, calculated to discourage hope and quench the fervor for independence."

A low exclamation that was very like an abjuration burst from Dickinson's lips and his eyes flashed first on the speaker and then upon Armand.

The color was come back to the young Frenchman's face.

"In my own country, gentlemen," he laughed, "we have *asiles* for such poor miserables. However . . . my reputation, how dear it is to me! You will proceed, I beg."

It was admirably done. A quaver of relief spread abroad.

"The document in the case," said Galloway, and handed Dickinson the writing executed by Lord Chetwynde at the Halifax prison. "An agreement duly signed, accepting this traitorous mission."

Having delivered it over, he rubbed his hands together softly.

"An arrant concoction to be sure!" railed Pliarne "What could be easier? A signature? Of course, of course. But his?—zounds! Such effrontery passes belief. 'An adventurer arrested in Virginia,' forsooth? Wert ever in Virginia, you Tory?"

"No," answered Galloway, coolly.

A heavy reverberating voice, passion-thrilled, boomed through the door beyond the curtains, and the sound of hand-clapping followed it in a far velvet tumult.

"'Tis the Declaration!" exclaimed Pliarne. "The Declaration! 'Tis before them for signatures. They will decide in an hour. And you listen to this smug poltroon!"

The sweat broke upon Dickinson's forehead. Through all these months, by voice and pen, he had striven to incite the Colonies to mutiny. Yet he had recoiled from Jefferson's bold resolution to sever from the crown. Resistance he had preached, not secession. And yet—and yet—

He turned to Armand. "The content of your message," he said, "so much depends. If . . "

"Sir!" Armand stopped him sharply. "What I bear is for the Congress!"

"In God's name, then, who and what are you?"

"A messenger of the French king!"

Silence fell. Through it Joseph Galloway's

unctuous voice spread softly. "Gentlemen, I have a conclusive witness. One moment!"

He passed through the side door and an instant later entered, leading Anne. All eyes were turned upon them.

"'Tis Mistress Tillotson!" One of the committee who had hitherto kept silence was speaking. "A lady of Virginia, gentlemen, whom I do know loyal and worthy of all credence."

She did not dare to look about her. She stood, white, piteous. The quiet was unbearable.

The oily voice broke it. "Look upon this man. Is he or is he not Louis Armand, lately seized in Virginia for representing himself a French nobleman?"

She turned her eyes an instant to him and saw his face, deadly pale, his eyes terrible, staring at her.

"He is," she answered in a scarce audible tone.

"You received this paper from the hands of an officer in the British service? And recognize the signature as that of this man?"

"Yes." The questions were pitiless. Her limbs were failing her, and she caught at the jamb of the door.

If she only dared look at him! Would they never let her go? The hypocrisy in those rounded, smooth

syllables! Were they framing thanks? "For her loyalty," "her courage," "at a moment when a matter of great import trembled in the balance!"

"Enough!" The sharp, strained tone of Dickinson was a relief. "The lady is fatigued."

Then the cooler air of the outer hall smote her face, and the falling curtain shut away from her that dreadful room, the torturing voice, the dufflegray men, and among them all that silent accusing face, those eyes suddenly sunken, round with pain —Armand whom she loved and had betrayed!

As the door closed behind her, Armand dropped into a chair and buried his face in his hands.

"And now, gentlemen," finished Galloway, turning again into the room, "will you let this unspeakable villain pass those doors now?"

"Sir," protested Pliarne, appealing to Dickinson, "sir . . gentlemen . . a monstrous error is being made. A coil of circumstance has been cunningly wove, to explain which there is no time. Nor, mayhap, now would you credit it. But as an officer of the French army, as a chevalier, as a French gentleman, I lay my oath upon the integrity of this mission and of this man."

But he knew as he spoke that what he said was futile.

Joseph Galloway had crossed the room behind

Armand's chair, and now, with a quick movement, reaching from behind, thrust his hand into the young man's breast and drew forth the forged parchment.

"Document number two," he said, tossing it upon the table. Armand had sprung to his feet, his head thrown high, a tiger gleam in his eyes.

"*Canaille!*" cried Pliarne.

Dickinson's eye overran the writing. "Send for the guards!" he said, in a choked voice. "A file to seize him!" And Joseph Galloway went out in haste.

At the word a fury of passion seemed to capture Armand. Those near him fell back. His dress-sword flashed out and drew a burnished ring about him.

"Stand back!" he hurled between his teeth. "You shall not stop me! Back, I say! Messenger I am and my message I will deliver."

"Madman! Will he cut his way in?" cried Dickinson.

Armand, dragging the curtain from its hooks, had gained the hall. He sprang at the great doors and struck them frenziedly with his sword. But with the first blow the light steel rattled to the floor broken half way to the hilt.

When Anne had issued from the ante-room a few

moments before, she had emerged into the main corridor. She was dizzy, sick, and the last words of her questioner were in her ears. She found herself saying them over dully. "A matter of great import." "Trembling in the balance."

An old door-keeper in a blue coat with faded lace sat near-by on a wooden chair, but the day was warm and he was dozing. His mouth was open, and he had not stirred when she came out.

She could hear the muffled voices clashing upon one another, coming from the main room where the delegates sat. The door at one end of the corridor opening on the green was ajar and she was vaguely aware, as a background, of the murmurous, multi-keyed noises that hang above an orderly assemblage of many people.

And standing leaning against the wall, a swift knowledge came to her. The waiting crowd outside —her guide's haste as he had hurried her through the streets from the Red Lion Tavern. A matter "of great import." The Declaration!

They were considering it, hesitating. Armand's message might have decided, and she had betrayed him—stay! She had the packet. It was there in her cloak. She must find Doctor Franklin—ah, he must be in there at that moment. She had sworn to give it into his very hands—he must read it at

once—at once! With the thought, her eager fingers dragged it out.

She glanced at the old watchman. Daily familiarity had made such councils hackneyed to him. With eyes upon him she stole to the door in the center. She turned the knob softly and tried it. It was locked. Smitten with her impotency, she leaned against it and rattled the knob.

All at once she felt it giving; a key had been turned from the inside. She heard the roused doorkeeper shuffling toward her, heard his protestant whisper, and tugged with all her strength.

A buzz of talk that the stout panels had deadened clamored loud in her ears. She saw nothing but a broad aisle, above whose center hung an enormous, many-prismed chandelier, glancing back the sunlight.

Tears burned her eyes to mist and her throat was choking. Out of the mist, as she stopped, the crowded body of the hall stupefied her with people. The sound of voices rising as she had entered stilled in an instant to a silence, broken by an exclamation and the taut blow of a gavel. She was dimly conscious of men—bewigged, dressed mostly in black and snuff-color, with white neck-cloths—one or two on their feet. Her fingers under her cloak clasped tight the precious packet—so tight she could feel

its ridges cut into her flesh—and a clammy faintness was upon her.

Suddenly this left her and the jarring walls drew into place.

She was standing in the center of a square room, plain-walled, with three tall barred windows at each side hung with green Venetian blinds. In front of her was a raised, square rostrum between great empty fire-places, and leaning over its desk, an elderly man gazing down. Surprise seemed carved upon his features, and looking, she felt a dreadful hysterical desire to laugh.

Below on the floor and facing her stood a short, stout old man with a bald head and a fringe of white hair. His kindly eyes, behind great iron-rimmed spectacles, gave her confidence. It came to her in a flash that this was the great Doctor Franklin.

Quivering, she stood before him and curtsied low. Then she raised her hand and gave him the packet.

Everything clouded after that, and the ground was swaying. She saw him break the seal to unfold the paper and start as he bent his eyes upon it. Through the buzz of whispered curiosity she felt a familiar voice strike, speaking her name, and saw the sharp features and foxy hair of Mr. Jefferson. His hand was drawing her toward the entrance. She heard

Doctor Franklin's voice, like a great clear organ note: "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills from whence cometh my help."

Then, as they reached the doors, a clamor on the other side—the sound of metal striking against the wood.

The hinges swung outward. She had a momentary glimpse of Armand standing in the corridor, white, disheveled, a broken sword in his hand—saw him starting back, and, as the doors closed heavily behind her, she felt herself sinking into blackness.

"Louis! Louis!" She thrust the faintness back with a wail. "I could not help it!"

His eyes were sharp spears through her heart, his voice like twisted agony. "Betrayed! Denounced to the Congress! Oh God! and by *you!* My honor . . my love . . my trust . . all ended!"

Galloway entered from the porch with two soldiers in the Continental uniform. "In the name of the Congress!" said Dickinson, pointing to Armand.

"Sauve—toi!" Pliarne's warning vibrated with anxiety. He stumbled awkwardly with the cry, pitching in front of the soldiers, and as though to save himself the fall, grasped each by an ankle.

Before they could recover from the surprise, Ar-

mand, turning like a flash, had darted by them to the ante-room, gained the door and disappeared.

"Quick!" gasped Anne, as the discomfited soldiers bolted after him. "He must not escape!"

"Are you not satisfied, Mistress?" demanded Pliarne, turning on her bitterly.

She staggered through the torn curtain to the table at this, and held out to him his Lordship's pledge, with a hand shaking like a wave-ripple.

He started uncontrollably as he read it, and made a gesture of despair. *"Le bon Dieu!"* he cried, his eyes filling with tears. "Unfortunate that I am! I have helped him to die!"

Then she drooped forward into Pliarne's arms.

"Clang!" The great bell in the dome above spoke suddenly. Dickinson, with an exclamation, went out hastily, the other delegates with him. The single remaining spectator approached the spot where Pliarne knelt chafing Anne's hands.

The Frenchman said no word, but he got upon his feet with such a look in his face that Joseph Galloway, his head bent down, went out slinkingly and with speed, like a whipped cur.

"Clang!"

The sound rang out again, and with its music mixed a vast roar of voices that penetrated from the

streets. "Clang!" another brazen throat took it up, and "They sign! They sign!" came in a shout that shook the building.

"Clash! Clang!"

All the steeples in Philadelphia were shouting to one another now. The Great Sundering was accomplished. That hour a nation was born—out of the clamor of bells, out of the hearts of men.

The tidings flew from street to street, from house to house, from chamber to chamber. Neighbor hurried with it to neighbor. The well whispered it to the sick. Wherever it went, down came the king's arms, as one would pluck a fowl, from court house, from market-place, from tavern, to give glory to bon-fires.

It was to take wings and fly north and south—to the frontier in the great north woods—to Williamsburg, where, in the royal palace that Lord Dunmore had made a fort, now sat Virginia's first governor, his Excellency Patrick Henry. And Virginia was to answer with salvos of cannon and with illuminations.

But in the State House under the cupola, where the big bell that first pealed liberty cracked its throat for joy, Anne lay sobbing—

"Louis! Listen, Louis! Listen to the bells! It was yours . . . your message that I gave them!

Independence! It is come at last, and you have gone to die, because I betrayed you. But it was to save you, dear! Will you ever understand? Can you hear them, Louis? The bells! Come back! Come back to me—only to hear them ring! Only to understand!"

General Lord Howe sat one evening a month later aboard the Duchess of Gordon, anchored below Staten Island, playing at draughts. His late surrender of Boston to General Washington had ruffled his equanimity. But now Clinton had joined him, haggard from the trouncing Moultrie had given him in South Carolina, and his Lordship's brother, Admiral Lord Howe, had hove to in the harbor with a prodigious new army in a fleet of one hundred and twenty sail. My Lord, therefore, felt very comfortable again.

The general's opponent at the table, Lord Chetwynde, wore lace in his sleeves and smoked a foreign cigarette, from which he flicked the white ash daintily with his little finger. As he sat, one felt his eyes, a kind of cold, keen, speculative humor in them. Another officer, Sir Evelyn Clarke, sat with legs wide apart, near-by. The glazed sconces were brilliantly lighted, and the room rocked pleasantly as the ship rose and fell to the wash.

An aide, pausing at the cabin door, saluted.

"Well," asked Lord Howe, "any one else for me?"

"No, sir; for Lord Chetwynde. He brings a personal communication to his Lordship."

"Very well, bring him down. With your permission, of course, my Lord." And his Lordship turned to the game again.

"I would the admiral might haste with his olive-branch," he yawned, studying the draught-board through lazy eyelids. "'Tis most uncommon dull here. 'Hell, Hull and Halifax'—egad! I'd as lief be a prison governor at any one of them!"

"Less room for your cursed experiments, I suppose, Charles. You were always fond of them at Halifax," commented the single spectator, in an Irish brogue. "Why, my Lord, I remember just before he sailed (may you never run another jail, Charles!) he let a rascal out on a secret service and took his promise in writing to come back to him in a month to the noose. I hope you'll invite me to meet him when he returns . . . Eh? What! May I bet the devil my head, but there he is now!"

The pair at the table looked at the face of the man who had entered, and at his dress of purple velvet frayed with travel, and Lord Chetwynde started to sudden incisiveness.

"Louis Armand!"

The newcomer bowed and stood silent, waiting.

"You return in accordance with our contract, I presume?"

"Yes, your Lordship."

"You are a day late."

"I was not aware of your Lordship's transference."

"Burn me, but he's been to Halifax!" exclaimed Lord Chetwynde under his breath.

He sat a moment nursing his chin. Then he seized a paper, wrote a line and added his signature. "I am already informed of your attempt," he said, "and of your failure. Egad, these petticoat patriots are everywhere! However, that was not your fault. I regard only the honesty of your purpose. Here is your release from the penalty. Consider yourself at liberty."

Armand read the paper, and then handed it back. "I can not accept it, your Lordship," he said.

"Why not?" demanded Lord Howe in astonishment.

"I did not intend to deliver the message given me to the Congress. Had I been admitted I should have delivered a very different one."

"May I bet the devil my head!" ejaculated Sir Evelyn.

Lord Chetwynde flung away his cigarette, his keen

eyes on Armand's, and tore up the paper slowly. "That alters the case," he said. "My Lord, I suppose I shall have to trouble you to hang this honest renegade for me?"

"Too pleased!" said Howe. "The first thing in the morning, Charles. Take him on deck and come and finish the game."

"My obligation is at an end?" asked Armand.

"Of course, of course," acquiesced his Lordship. "Excuse me, my Lord; I'll be back presently—precede me, if you please."

He opened the door and his prisoner passed before him to the star-lighted deck. The next instant Armand had leaped to the bulwarks and thrown himself into the sea.

There was strident confusion, a running forward of marines and a turning of lanterns on to the water. "Better lower a boat," advised Lord Chetwynde.

"No time for that." Sir Evelyn's voice was at his elbow. "A hundred yards and you'll never find him. Guard, send your surest marksman here to pick him off."

"There he is," bawled a voice, as the sharpshooter came forward. "I see his head."

"I think," said Lord Chetwynde, "laying a hand on the weapon, "that I'll have a shot myself." Tak-

ing it from the man's hand, he laid the long barrel on the rail and drew a slow and careful sight.

"Better be quick, sir," counseled the guard, anxiously. "He's a strong swimmer. He'll be out of range presently."

"Sir Evelyn," spoke his Lordship, testily, "a little farther from my elbow, please. There, damme, I've lost sight of him! Eh? Where? Oh, yes." He sighted again with deliberation and fired.

"Missed, by Harry!" he cried in a tone of chagrin.

The stars rocked dimly in the tide. "Too bad, sir!" said the captain of the marines. "No use to lower a boat now—'tis too dark to find a whale; he'll be ashore in twenty minutes."

"Another of your damned experiments, Charles," said Sir Evelyn.

CHAPTER XX

THE WAKE OF WAR

It was a gloomy Virginia to which Anne returned that anxious fall—a Virginia whose heart beat with the North, where Howe was weaving his famous cord to encircle the throat of the monster Rebellion. Pastoral life had ended abruptly; the Golden Age had become one of Iron. "And all the women that were wise-hearted, did spin with their hands."

Those Virginia women! They stayed at home through all the fear and loss and wonder of that early campaign when tried armies met untried ones. They wrote brave letters to their husbands and sons riding with Washington and marching in the ranks under Wayne and Weedon. And, cheering themselves how they might, they sold their jewels, melted their clock-weights for bullets, tore up their dresses to make flags and their underclothes for lint and bandages.

Gladden Hall suffered with the rest. Colonel Tillotson was much away on affairs of the Committee

of Safety, or at Williamsburg conferring with his Excellency Governor Henry; and the looms which wove at all turned out cloth for Continental uniforms. Across the plant-rows, where the negroes hoed, Groam, the overseer, with cowhide under his arm and his old Fontenoy bell-mouth tower musket strapped on his back, still walked his horse with ferret eyes under his broad-brimmed hat. But there was little leaf raised, and the wharves at the foot of the lawn were overgrown with weeds.

Inside the great house there was the same candle-lighted dining-room, the high-backed chairs, the tall, cumbrous clock, the portraits, the polished sideboard reflecting the slender-stemmed glasses. But the meals were silent.

Anne's trouble hung over the household in a shadow that was not lightened by the presence of vaster ones near at hand. She had sorrowed with that festering sorrow that is self-accusatory. And to know that never so few, aware of her part in that Philadelphia scene, believed her to have done a heroic thing, was like an added death to her. For a time she had fled for refuge to her old passion for the cause. But the effort failed.

One day early in the New Year, when the world was dusted with delicate frost like seed-pearl, Colonel Tillotson brought to Gladden Hall the

news of how "the old fox of Mt. Vernon," by a wily double across the icy Delaware, had taken the Hessians at Trenton. Anne heard it apathetically; to her despair, victory and defeat spelled the same.

When the door closed upon her, the colonel looked at his wife silently. "And she still believes in him!"

"As she believes in us," replied the lady softly. "Colonel," she said keenly, "you have heard news."

"Aye," he answered, after a pause, "I have. A reply came to Mr. Henry's confidential inquiries today. There is no doubt that Armand is the same prisoner who escaped from the Duchess of Gordon off Amboy last August."

"Thank God!" breathed Mrs. Tillotson, fervently. "I am glad; I can't help it."

"Anne had better not know. 'Twill do her no possible good."

"Colonel," said the lady decisively, "in this I must have my way. I am going to tell her just as fast as I can." She rose, laid aside her knitting, took up a candle, and left him standing dubiously before the fire.

The light came back to Anne like the spring sun; the great horror was gone, and in spite of the war's gloom, Gladden Hall grew more cheerful again.

She devoured the columns of the Gazettes, and read eagerly letters which came to Henry from abroad.

These told her how the Reprisal, dodging the British sloops of war, had landed Benjamin Franklin safely at Nantes, of his meeting there with Beaumarchais, and of his reception in Paris at the little hotel in the *Rue Vieille du Temple*, where a mercantile sign of "Roderique Hortalez & Co." hid a pleasant conspiracy whose object was the furnishing of war supplies to the American colonists, and whose silent partners were a prime minister and a king. Somewhere, she thought, there in his own land, perhaps, Armand was safe—not believing in her, but free and uncondemned.

The sound of war came nearer when Howe's fleet sailed into the Chesapeake, and when Henry, summoned in haste from Hanover, called out the militia. She watched them march through Williamsburg, sixty-four companies strong; but the fleet and the army it carried sailed on, to beat back Washington at Brandywine, to enter Philadelphia, and turn the grave town into an orgie of Tory rejoicing.

Philip Freneau was still mixing caustic ink. The sparkling vitriol of his rhyming was flying on satire wings through the length and breadth of the land.

It was a time now when the pen was become mighty —when more money was offered in Royalist New York for the capture of a Quaker editor of a Trenton Gazette than for the body of a Continental governor of New Jersey. And this adventurous scape-grace, with the spirit of his Huguenot ancestors who escaped over-sea with the Pintards and the DeLanceys after Louis XIV revoked the Edict of Nantes, was putting liberty into type—was sending out songs of virile vigor to be chanted in the patriots' line, to hearten dog-day marches and camps in bloody snows.

So the months passed, in alternate hope and despair. Spring unfurled, summer dropped its blooms, autumn singed glebe and copse, snow fell and purified the earth-stains. And at last Virginia knew that Burgoyne had been entrapped in the northern forests; that Philadelphia had been evacuated; that the cord which was to encircle the throat of the Rebellion had snapped; that France had recognized independence and made a treaty of alliance with the United States.

There followed a closer campaign when Lord Germaine, the king's war minister, having failed to strangle the monster, attacked its extremities—when the red-coats swept into the southern harbors, when Savannah and Augusta fell, when Lincoln's

army was caught at Charles-town, and Gates routed at Camden—and these were the South's darkest days.

It knew there was no hope from the army in the North, meager, ill-clothed, half-starved, without magazines, arsenals or credit. Washington lay watching like a hawk Clinton's ten thousand men at New York, hoping for an effective force from France, waiting with the sublime patience which, more than all else, made him a great soldier.

Virginia bore her burdens uncomplainingly—giving of her substance to the struggle, while the slaves which Cornwallis sent scampering from burned lower plantations trailed through her borders, sowing insurrection among the faithful blacks.

"John-the-Baptist," demanded Anne sternly, one day, after Groam had reported that scarce fifty slaves remained in the quarters, "an the British come here, are you going to run away, too?"

"Mis' Anne!" he complained appealingly. "Don' yo' know no 'spectable nigger gwineter list'n to dem shif'less trash whut go ramshacklin' eroun' widout no homes? Dee ain' no 'count; yo' couldn' swap 'em off fo' shucks. Yo' knows I ain' nuvver gwine leabe de plantation whar I wuz drug up. Dat Cornwallis! Huh! Dis nigger smell de brimstone whut's huntin' fo' him!"

When the sky looked blackest came General Nathaniel Greene into the south, young, light-hearted and eager. And what did he not accomplish? He welded anew the scattered remnants of Gates's army, fanned North Carolinian Whiggery into a blaze, beat Tarleton, sent Cornwallis back, breathing hard, to the sea-coast. It was the end of the second campaign.

"What will King George do now?" Anne asked Henry jubilantly.

His face was very grave as he answered: "There is only one thing left; 'tis a stroke at the heart of the rebellion. And that heart is here in Virginia." He guessed truly.

There were hasty preparations for flight throughout the lower peninsula on that snow-shod day when the traitor Arnold's fifty ships came to anchor off James-town Island. The sky was a ceiling of translucent gray. The stubby cedars trailed sweeping boughs of crystalled beryl, and every shrub was cased in argent armor. Fleet horsemen had ridden from Williamsburg in all directions, rousing the frozen countryside.

At noon Anne took her place in the chariot beside Mrs. Tillotson, bound for Doctor Walker's of Castle Hill, far enough north to be beyond the reach

of the invaders. Her aunt was to fare even farther, to Berkeley.

They waved brave good-bys through tears to the little group of house negroes whimpering on the porch. Rashleigh was to go with the remaining servants to Brandon, Mammy Evaline was left in charge of the place, and John-the-Baptist, her son, was to care for the horses and run them off on approach of the British. The house linen and silver Anne had buried with her own hands, and the family portraits had been hidden under the stables.

It was a sad journey, but one performed that day by more than one household.

Colonel Tillotson rode a part of the way beside the coach. "'Twill not be for long," he insisted cheeringly. "I have assurance from Mr. Henry that Washington will send troops before spring breaks. He thought it would be General Lafayette —the young French marquis who passed through Williamsburg, you remember. Would Washington himself could come!" he added fervently.

But his wife was not to be comforted. "Colonel," she cried brokenly, "I feel sure we shall never see Gladden Hall again."

More than once before spring came tiptoeing down

the trees, Anne looked out to the north from quiet Castle Hill, homesick for a sight of Greenway Court and Baron Fairfax. Weakness and age had at last sent the old man to his chair, and he sat through the long days, sorrowfully patient, as his ancestor, the hero of Naseby fight, sat at Denton in Yorkshire, waiting the coming of the victorious banners of the king.

The beginnings of the struggle had found him doggedly wrathful.

"'Bill of Rights,' aigh?" he would shout. "I want no benefit of it. I am a Colonial, and loyal."

And when his neighbors contended that what they stood for was the old issue for which their ancestors broke pikes at Marston Moor, he turned his back upon them.

In the Old Dominion there was comparative tranquillity, but even in the forest he had heard the first blare of the king's armies in Boston and New York with a hungering fear that drew his eyes often wistfully toward Mt. Vernon. There sat the lad he had trained and molded, "the first soldier in Virginia," a grave man. They whispered evil things of this man's loyalty now, but the baron for long shut his ears and would not hear.

The time came soon when Tories were hated, despised, driven by fire from their homes, their prop-

erty confiscate. But this old man alone was not touched.

"Let the rebels come!" he had roared, pounding the floor with his thorn stick. "Let them come! I met the Indians here in fifty-five, and I leave for no cursed rebels. The king may not be able to protect, but he will reimburse me."

But Tories and Whigs passed by alike, and not a pound was touched in his store-house, not a horse taken from his stables. When the foragers swept the valleys, his field slaves slunk away with the rest, but he had not a house negro who did not stay with him to the end.

The final chapter was opened at last. Lafayette was marching southward with twelve hundred of Washington's own light infantry! The word had struck sharper than an adder's tooth. The bloody snows of Valley Forge, the pelting retreat through the Jersies, want, rout, discouragement and despair! The king must win, and George Washington was gone too far even for love's forgiveness. Now he sent his rebels to his own natal Colony to hurl them, in a final desperate attack, at the king's throat.

After this news the baron took to his couch and closed his doors against report. Through all the war Washington had found time to send gentle and tender letters to his old friend. These my Lord

had read, longing for some sign of sorrow or of turning, but they had brought none. Now he read no more.

One morning Anne stood at the deep-set window of her room at Castle Hill. Far away, their dim splendor relieved by golden gorges of early sunlight, reared the solitary mountains, hung with pale green, pale gold, and blent lavender and gray like faded tapestries. The June breeze was soft with the first thrill of summer, blowing across the shelving fields. Birds were fluting in the tulip-trees, and the dewed odor of roses lay on the garden, drenchingly sweet. The place seemed safe folded from the war that lay, a sullen fiend in a cloud, far away across the Virginia hills.

A distant clatter came to her, and she looked and listened where the eastern road bent behind clusters of trees. Almost before she had guessed the meaning of the sound, a troop of dragoons, whose red coats proclaimed them British, dashed into view and rode at top-speed toward the house.

The British! So far to the westward. What could it mean? Then, in clutching apprehension, she fled downstairs to Mrs. Walker's room, to find that lady already dressing with speed and trepidation. As she opened the door, the yard below

swarmed with a confusion of soldiers and shrieking servants.

"Stay where you are," came Doctor Walker's voice from the next room. "I am going."

"No, Doctor," Mrs. Walker opposed. "I am going myself." And go she did, Anne with her.

Aunt Daph', the cook, having fled from the kitchen, was crouched shuddering at the foot of the stair. "Dem's de Britishers, missus!" she moaned —"dem's de Britishers!"

"I know it," answered Mrs. Walker calmly, as a knock thundered at the door. "Go back to your kitchen."

The figure on the threshold bowed till his plumes swept the sill.

"Pardon me, Madam—ladies," he began, "but I must ask of your hospitality a breakfast for myself and my officers. I may introduce myself? Colonel Tarleton, of the British Legion, at your service."

Anne caught an astonished breath at realization that she was standing before the most dreaded of Cornwallis's cavalry leaders. Could this red-cheeked, petulant-lipped lad be the dragoon of whose cruelty and daring she had so often heard? She curtsied slowly to his bow.

"I might add," announced the visitor, "that no

harm shall be done this property. We have business farther on."

Farther on! Anne's mind leaped to the thought of Charlottesville only six miles away. The Virginia Assembly was in session there. And Henry! She must gain a little time.

"Let me see to the breakfast, Mrs. Walker," she volunteered; "Aunt Daph' is quite distracted."

Tarleton smiled, bowed again to her, and clanked to the door. Then Anne caught Mrs. Walker's hand and whispered: "'Tis a raid on the Assembly. We must keep them here as long as possible. Tell the doctor."

She had no time to speak further, for Tarleton re-entered with the others.

"I have been obliged to set a guard about the negro quarters and at the front and rear entrances of the house," he said. "We shall soon relieve you of this inconvenience. Ah, Doctor, good-morning!"

Anne betook herself to the kitchen and stirred Aunt Daph' to activity. While the great fire roared, her brain was busy. She must get through that cordon of red-coats—must!—*must!*

As the cook piled the irons with fragments of chicken, Anne's eyes, through the back door and window, took in the situation. Full a dozen troopers were grouped there, stretched lazily in the sun,

their horses hobbled and cropping the grass eagerly in a widening half-circle. The quarters were on the farther side, out of sight from the kitchen. Seeing, she bade Aunt Daph' lay more of the chicken on the racks, and herself fed the fire till its heat scorched her cheeks.

"'Clar ter goodness, Mis' Anne, yo' got 'nuff dar fo' fo'ty, 'stid o' fo'!"

"Hush!" Anne commanded; "go and lay one of the tables in the milk-room."

The negress raised her hands.

"Wid all dem sojers out dar? Gordamighty, honey, dee jes' split my haid wide op'n!"

"Do as I tell you," said Anne. "They won't hurt you. Make no noise, and come back quickly."

The old woman made her way gingerly past the groups across the yard.

"Mis' Anne," she said as she came back, all her teeth gleaming, "one ob dem Britishers call to me jes' lak folks. 'Hopes yo' got sumpin' good fo' us, too, auntie,' he say. Lawd, honey, I reck'n dee's pow'ful hongry ter smell dis yere!"

Anne heaped a great platter high from the dripping grids, and flanked it with a pyramid of corn bread.

"Now, Aunt Daph'," she breathed, excitedly, "take this. Hold it high and fall not on the steps. When

you come to the milk-room door you are to tell the soldiers that the colonel in here says they are all to have their breakfast at once. Do you understand?"

"Yas'm. Yas'm. But dis yere chick'n's er heap too good fo' dem low-down nosin' debbles!"

Anne watched her through the door in a quiver of apprehension. Would they go? She prayed frantically that they would smell that savory odor. She heard the laugh of the officers in the next room, and above it, the tones of the cook outside, now scornfully belligerent:

"Yore cun'l in dar say yo' is ter eat dis yere up mighty quick er yo' don' git nuttin' 'tall."

There was a murmur among the troopers. It was a fearful temptation. Then they succumbed before that delicate aroma, and while Anne held her breath, the last guard had overcome his scruples and vanished into the milk-room.

She did not wait an instant, but slipped out hatless and was away like a flash to the outer ring of horses. Her eye picked the speediest with the unerring judgment of the born horsewoman. She leaped to his back, took the yard paling, and flew across the soft loam field to the high-road.

When Lieutenant-Colonel Banistre Tarleton entered the kitchen smilingly to see why breakfast

delayed, he found the room empty and sounds from the out-house told him the rest. The petulant-lipped lad became instantly a raging demoniac, and the crestfallen men tumbled out, mounting with a speed increased by threats and revilings.

A sight of the horseless trooper sent the leader's passion leaping to knowledge. "'Tis the girl," he cried. "Damnation! She's off to warn them!"

And his curses suddenly mixed themselves with steel-sharp orders.

Mrs. Walker wrung her hands as the last trooper galloped off after the rest on a horse impressed from the stables.

"God grant they don't catch her!" she prayed.

As Anne sped along the curving stretch of road over the low hill spurs, she leaned to the horse's mane, crying to him: "Run, you splendid boy! Run! 'Tis to save the Assembly!" And the great creature, slim, lustrous, blood-bay, snorted and settled to action, his limpid eye catching the terror-white as if he, stolen from some Virginia stable, knew what the words meant.

Gallop and gallop; she heard the red clods patter on the road behind as she went. One mile—two miles. The wind-warped trees stretched by in a whirling, drunken race of foliaged dervishes. Three miles . . . they must surely know by now.

She passed two riders and noted their glance of wonder. One called out to her, but she did not stop. The terrific pace made her breath come jaggedly, and it was only by a supreme effort that she kept her seat on the pommelless saddle.

The last two miles flung away in a dulled red roar.

There were groups upon the court house steps when she pulled up her frothing horse, and Henry himself pushed forward to her side.

"Tarleton—" she panted. "At Castle Hill . . . coming to . . . take the Assembly."

Henry turned and repeated the message. It was caught up on all sides and bandied up and down the corridors. There was a rush for the sheds and hurried mounting. Then another cry spread; Jefferson—he was at Monticello.

"How much time?" asked Henry briefly of Anne.

"Ten minutes," she answered at hazard.

"Too little. They will be upon him before this." He brought his horse and vaulted into the saddle. "Will Tarleton know you have come?"

"Yes."

"Then you must not stay," he said firmly. "You shall ride with me."

Before she could answer, a horseman came clat-

tering in from a bridle-path. It was Colonel Carter, and he took in the preparations at a glance.

"Good!" he shouted. "Lose no time, gentlemen. Captain Jouett has warned Monticello. The Assembly stands dissolved, to meet at Staunton three days hence."

About noon hoofs rang behind them in the flinty road, and Henry and Anne reined their horses into the brush. Two more riders galloped by, to wheel and come back at Henry's halloo. They were Mr. John Tyler and Colonel Harrison. Fatigued and hungry as they were, both essayed to smile.

"Is Jefferson safe?" cried Henry.

"Aye," Colonel Harrison assured him. "The family are gone to Colonel Carter's, and all of the gentlemen who were at Monticello are in the mountains. 'Twas a narrow squeak."

A rivulet full of crystal bravery plashed down beside the spot where they had halted, and Henry, dropping a lank leg over his horse's neck, jumped to the ground and twisted a cup from a leaf.

"Let us drink to Tarleton's speedy return to Cornwallis," said Tyler.

"Nay," Henry smiled, raising the spilling cup toward Anne, "but—may his coming ne'er lack so fair and so swift an advance courier!"

"Whither think you we had best ride?" Colonel Harrison asked, as they started.

"Lafayette is nigh the Rapid-Ann," said Henry. "I' faith," with a smile at the girl beside him, "the man who named it should have seen you ride! Best to reach our own lines for the night and to-morrow we will off for Staunton. Ely's house should be near our troops; and Mistress Tillotson can get safe escort to Fredericksburg."

At mid-afternoon they stopped at a small hut in a gorge and asked for something to eat. A muscular, tallow-faced old woman, seemingly the sole occupant, planted herself uncompromisingly in the doorway and demanded of them who they were, in a tone of manifest suspicion.

"We are members of the Assembly," said Mr. Tyler.

"And what do ye here in the woods?"

"We have just been compelled to leave Charlottesville by the approach of the enemy."

The old woman shook her slate-colored head, stuck her arms akimbo, and glared at them.

"Ye have, have ye?" she blurted. "Ye cowardly knaves! Here my men folks air all out a-fightin' the Britishers fer ye, an' ye're runnin' away with all yer might. Clear out, fer ye'll get nothin' here."

The look which Tyler turned upon the rest was so full of blended hunger and chagrin that they could scarce maintain their gravity.

"But, my good woman," Mr. Tyler expostulated, "we were obliged to. 'Twould not do to have the whole Legislature captured by Cornwallis. Here," he continued, pointing, "is Mr. Speaker Harrison; you don't think he would have fled if it hadn't been necessary?"

She pursed her lips and jerked her chin with an audible sniff.

"I allus thought right smart of Colonel Harrison till now," she answered, "but he'd no business to tuck tail an' run."

"Wait a moment, Madam." Henry smoothed the wrinkles of mirth from his face as she was about to close the door in their faces. "Wait a moment. You have surely heard of Mr. Tyler. You would hardly believe that he would take to flight without good reason?"

"That I wouldn't."

"But here he is," finished Henry, with a wave of his hand.

She stood a moment nonplussed. "Sakes o' mercy!" she ejaculated, with sagging cheeks, "I wouldn't a thought it! I'd a' swore *he'd* never run

from a red-coat. But seein' he has, he'll get nary bite to eat in my house. Ye kin ride on."

It was Henry's turn now to look comical dismay, but Anne met his smile and flashed in.

"Suppose—suppose one should tell you that Patrick Henry had run with the rest?"

"Patrick Henry?" burst out the other angrily. "I'd tell ye it was a passle o' lies! I reckon we'uns know *him*. My old man was at the nabbin' o' Johnny Burgoyne, an' now my boys air boun' ter ketch that sarpint Co'nwallis. Next year all three on 'em air goin' arter Clinton down ter New York. Mebbe ye think *they'd* run from the Britishers! Patrick Henry! If he run at all, 'twould be arter 'em, I kin tell ye."

"And yet," Anne said soberly, "this is Mr. Henry."

The old woman stared astounded, her hands twitching at her apron strings. She came close and gazed earnestly into his face.

"So it is," she said slowly; "so it is. I seen you onct ten year back, in Charlottesville. Well then, if Patrick Henry done it, it must be all right. 'Light an' come in. Y'all kin have the best on the place."

After the meal and rest, the four rode some hours through shaggy ravines strewn with wrack of storm,

where the green veins of every growing thing ran flush with frenzied sap; then to the low valleys of the Rapid-Ann. And here at last, spirals of smoke showed them where Lafayette lay encamped, waiting a junction with Wayne to march against Cornwallis.

The first challenge they met came from a detachment of Virginia riflemen, and, finding an old friend in their commander, Major Call, Colonel Harrison and Mr. Tyler elected to go no farther. Ely's house, Henry learned, was but a few miles beyond the picket-lines, and as to the morrow's escort for Anne, the major sent a lieutenant with them a mile down the river to headquarters to ask it.

It was a picturesque encampment through which they passed. There were few tents; mere wigwams of fresh-cut boughs to shed the dew. Here and there fires of blazing fence-rails glowed yellowly in the gathering twilight.

The tent of the acting colonel of the Virginia Continental regiment was pitched apart on a patch of beaten grass. Stools and a light folding-table holding pen and paper sat just outside the open flaps, from whose angle a lantern hung, already winking in the dusk.

Benches were on one side, and here, while their horses were cared for, Henry and Anne seated them-

selves to wait. Near-by the dusty silver of sycamores swayed against the shredded carnation of the sky, and from the distance, through the warm evening, came the hum of the camp, noises of mess-preparing and the tramp and neigh of horses.

They sat awhile silent, Anne's every nerve tired. Henry watched her. How softly white her cheeks, how deep the longing in her eyes!

"'Twas a quick plan and a splendid ride," he said at length. "A brave act, as are all of yours!"

She cringed suddenly. "I hate that word so!" she implored, and he knew of what she was thinking.

All at once she looked at him, speaking earnestly: "Do you believe I shall ever see him? Oh, if he could but know! But know that I was not false to him in my heart. At first I thought I would be content to know he was alive, even if I never saw him again . . if he hated me! But now . . now, I would give my life to hear him say that he forgave me!"

It was as if all the pent-up longing of the past time burst out in a flood. Her voice had sunk very low with the last words, for the lieutenant had approached again.

A horse pulled up before the tent and its rider dismounted. He wore the uniform of a colonel of the line, and even in the half-light, both the

watchers saw how strangely pallid his clear-cut features showed beneath the straight black peruke he wore.

An orderly sprang from the tent to lead away the dancing horse, and the lieutenant saluted:

"A gentleman to see you, Colonel. He requests escort to-night for a lady to Ely's, and to-morrow to Fredericksburg."

The colonel had seated himself at the table, and was spreading out a parchment map in the glow of the lantern. "Where are they?"

"They are here, sir."

As they came forward into the light, the seated figure settled back in the shadow and shaded his eyes with his hand. The lieutenant saluted and withdrew a little distance.

When the colonel spoke, it was in a muffled voice. "Your name, sir?"

Henry told him.

"For what lady do you wish this escort?" The black peruke was bent over the table. The quill was scratching.

"For this lady."

Anne had been staring, breathless, fascinated, her eyes fixed in a humid pain. She took a step nearer, stretching out her arms, her lips trembling to a sob.

"Louis!" Her breath clung about the name. Henry swallowed an exclamation.

At the whisper, the head lifted, and Armand's deep eyes looked at them out of a granite-pale face. They went past her as if she had been the air, and rested again on Henry.

"Her name?" he asked with an effort.

Anne drew back as if from a tangible blow. She flushed, and her eyes iced with a glint of the old, undying pride. She drew herself up and answered for Henry.

"Anne Tillotson," she said. But in spite of herself, a throb of pain beat through the clear words.

A moment's silence, through which the pen wrote slowly. Then Armand rose unsteadily as the lieutenant came forward, and thrust the order he had written into his hand.

"Conduct them," he said in a choked voice, and with his salute the tent flaps fell behind him.

"I warrant you found Colonel Armand a brusque cavalier," said the lieutenant as they pounded out of camp. "He is somewhat of a mystery, they say. No one knows where he came from. He joined the army in seventy-seven, and Washington took him up because he taught the militia brigades the drill like a French guardsman. He was at Valley Forge, too, and in New Jersey under Lafayette. He en-

listed a legion of his own—it was cut to pieces at Camden. He's young, too, but he fights like Mad Anthony Wayne."

Anne had no reply to make. In the darkness, she leaned her head to her horse's mane and wept with a rage of tears.

"He is fighting for us," she told herself over and over with a thrill, and ended it as often with a mental wail.

"But he will never forgive me—never—never—never!"

CHAPTER XXI

IN THE TRENCHES

Henry contrived to send early news of Anne's safety to Castle Hill, so that when she returned there she found the household undisturbed.

The sound of war had moved eastward, down the peninsula. Lafayette, the "boy," who the British commander wrote could not escape him, without sufficient men to meet his adversary went playing chase-the-fox. He hung on Cornwallis's flanks covering the American stores, anticipated his moves, harassed him, worried him with a thousand pin-pricks. In return, Tarleton and Simcoe played their wanton mischief, slaughtered the cattle, cut the throats of the young horses, destroyed the growing corn and tobacco and burned the barns. The path of the British front remained a trail of ruin and desolation.

Anne's sight of Armand at the river camp had seared her heart with a wish to be less far from him. She dreamed of battle-fields on which he lay dying —and she still misunderstood, still unforgiven.

Letters meantime came from Betsy Byrd. Her father had been failing in health, was taking no part in the struggle, and so far Westover had been in no way molested. Francis was a captain in Weedon's regiment.

"Only think, dear," wrote Betsy; "'tis the same old man who kept the tavern at Fredericksburg. To think of Frank serving under him!" An unconscious indication of the maternal leanings.

If other were needed, it was easily to be found. General Arnold had stopped for dinner on his raid upon Richmond, and Cornwallis had crossed the river at Westover and had been entertained. Pages were devoted to a description of Tarleton, over whom Betsy went into raptures.

Spurred by her craving for nearer news of the armies than reached Charlottesville, Anne answered in person the invitation the letters held, rode to Richmond with Henry when he returned from the Assembly at Staunton, and from Richmond came in two hours' sail to Westover.

The war had touched Mrs. Byrd lightly. She was as handsome and as peppery as ever and exhibited a certainty of British plans which Anne had occasion to remember later, when there were no gentle whispers of investigating the self-satisfied lady's conduct. She treated the visitor, however, on this

occasion, with consideration and refrained from using the word "rebel" oftener than she deemed necessary. Nor did she gibe at Francis's commission in the Continental army.

A week spent at Westover, the Byrd pinnace took Anne down the river to Burwell's, a proceeding at which Mrs. Byrd feebly protested, as the place was within a half dozen miles of Williamsburg, now the center of activity of both armies. But Anne reminded her that Colonel Tillotson was with Governor Nelson's militia in the neighborhood, and would not be dissuaded.

The first hours of her arrival at Burwell's were gilded by two bits of news: one that her uncle was daily expected there, the other that Gladden Hall was as yet undisturbed.

But this latter gleam was soon to be clouded. Mammy Evaline appeared the morning after Anne's arrival, half-crazed with grief and fear that was not appeased by the unexpected sight of her mistress.

She threw herself in a quivering heap and clasped Anne's feet.

"Gord, Gord, honey!" she sobbed. "Dee come et las'! Co'nwallis done ransack Gladden Hall las' night en he sojers kyar'd meh po' boy erway wid 'em. Whut's we ter do, honey? Dee's dar now. Yo' reck'n dee done kilt him yit?"

Anne stooped and patted the jerking shoulder. "Don't cry, Mammy," she comforted; "John-the-Baptist belongs to me. Do you suppose any Britisher would dare to hurt him?"

"Dat's whut I tol' 'em, honey; dat's whut I tol' 'em. 'Dat boy 'longs ter meh li'l mis',' I says, 'en yo' karnt tech er ha'r er he haid!' En dee look at me pizen-lak, and one say ter go 'way, fo' dee gwineter cut off he years!" She ended in a wail.

"Now, Mammy," chid Anne with decision, "don't you be frightened. I shall see that he is given back."

The old woman caught her breath in a sob of joy. "Oh, meh li'l' lamb! I knows yo' gwineter mek 'em let meh boy go! I knows et!" and she went away, trusting, to the quarters.

An hour later Anne took the York-town high-road, mounted on the least tempting of the horses the Burwells kept hidden in the woods. Opposite Williamsburg she climbed a knoll, but could see little sign of life in its deserted streets. Small wonder, for Cornwallis was only a handful of miles away. Here she turned to her left into an unused bridle-path, leading by a short cut to Gladden Hall.

She went boldly enough, with many self-assurances, and so, a bare half mile from the gates, rode full

tilt upon a group of British soldiery resting in the shade.

They sprang to their feet as her horse went back upon his haunches, and two of them seized his bridle, but dropped it at a word from an officer. The latter came forward.

"Your pardon, Mistress," he said courteously but firmly. "You can not pass farther in this direction."

"Why not?" she asked calmly. "'Tis the first time I was ever denied entrance to my own home."

He bowed now, with hat in his hand. "General Cornwallis occupies the house at present as his own quarters."

"I know it. I have personal business with his Lordship."

"In that case," he responded, "you may pass. I shall take pleasure in escorting you. I am one of the general's aides."

He mounted, and they rode in silence to the gates. Here and there a picket stepped from the roadside, but saluted as he saw her guide.

At the entrance to the grounds the ruin revealed brought a pang to her heart. The hedges were trampled down, the marbles along the drive defaced, and a wisp of smoke still curled from the burned

barns. She choked back her tears, feeling the other's eyes covertly upon her.

How familiar seemed the broad-columned porch, the windows, the wide door—but how unfamiliar now in its desolation!

The aide stood aside as she entered the hall. Through the half-open door of the drawing-room she saw braided uniforms grouped about a table from which floated out the sound of laughter and the clink and tinkle of glasses, filled from the cellars.

"And they tell me," rolled a full voice, with a bantering chord in it, "that you would have snared the lot of them at Charlottesville were it not for a girl. Fie, Colonel! A dragoon should have a sterner heart! Come now, make a clean breast of it. Who was the light-heeled damsel?"

"Mistress Tillotson of Gladden Hall," announced the aide at the door.

Anne went red and white at this contretemps, and Tarleton sprang up with such an exclamation that Lord Cornwallis, who had risen also, looked astonishment from one to the other. Then the commander caught the situation and laughed, as did the whole company.

The merriment sent resentment to Anne's face,

and the general sobered instantly into courteous contrition. Looking at her eager face, he had a vision of English spear-men thrusting against their crown at Prestonpans—of stern visored English Round-heads battering against king's pikes at Newberry. Englishmen in all ages had been the same; they chose a court, but would have freedom clothe it as a mantle. And if the women of this land strove as this one, what of the men?

"You bear easy honors, Mistress," he said, "therefore overlook our hilarity, which, I do protest, was yet ill-timed in the pain which the hard usage of such a noble mansion must bring. I regret," he added, "that such things must be. War is not a tender game, and beauty must suffer with the rest."

"You mistake," she told him quickly. "I come not to complain, but to ask a favor. A negro was taken on this property and is now held by your men. He has been my own body-servant all my life. Surely you can not lack for servants. I ask you now to give him back to me."

"It's the nigger named John-the-Baptist, I presume, sir," suggested one of the officers. "Colonel Dundas has him."

Cornwallis bowed, with an easy, good-humored smile on his big, confident, masterful face. "We who enjoy the hospitality of this mansion can scarce

refuse so light a favor to her who, under happier circumstances, should be our hostess. You shall have your body-servant, Mistress."

"I thank your Lordship," said Anne, with dignity.

Seating himself, Cornwallis wrote a hasty line, folded the paper and handed it to her.

"Colonel Dundas's brigade lies with Simcoe at Spencer's Ordinary, on the Williamsburg road," he said. "He will give you return passes."

The officers rose as she swept a low curtsy from the threshold. The aide held her stirrup with deference, and she cantered down through the gates and took the west road with a joyfully beating heart and the written order in the pocket of her gown.

But she did not finish the journey. She had fared scarce half the way when a far popping came from the distance. The next hill showed puffs of smoke hanging above the trees, and she knew that the sound was the rattle of engaging musketry. Could her eye have pierced beneath that foliage she would have seen the first skirmish of Lafayette's campaign—the brilliant charge of McPherson's dragoons upon Simcoe's rangers.

She had pulled up, startled at the sound, when a low but familiar voice called her from the thicket.

"John-the-Baptist!" she cried.

"Yas'm, Mis' Anne, et's me," he responded with a moist grin, parting the bushes. "I warn' gwineter curry no Britisher hosses long! 'Twarn no use'n 'em wallopin' me—meh hide's tougher'n whit-leather!"

"They let you go?"

He threw back his head like a baying hound and laughed loosely.

"Norm! Dem squinch-eyed scoun'ls nuvver let nuttin' go. I kep' meh eyes skunt en tuk ter de bresh dis ve'y mawnin' slicker'n er weasel. Greased lightnin' couldn' ketch *me!* Whut yo' doin' heah, Mis' Anne? Whar yo' been?"

"At Burwell's."

"Yo' jes' ride lickety-cut down dar ergain. Dat's de bes' place. 'Speck Mars' John be down dar 'treckly. Is yo' saw mammy?"

"Yes. She is safe at Westover."

"Bress de Lawd! Dee's fightin' ober dar now. I heahs de bullets say 'Whar iz-z-z yo'? Whar iz-z-z yo'?' Needn' be lookin' fo' dis heah nigger! Hurry erlong, Mis' Anne. I's comin' soon's et git dark."

For a fortnight, Burwell's heard the grind and rush of the armies so near. At length this lulled; Cornwallis had withdrawn sullenly into York-town.

Then in early September a momentous message flew from lip to lip. Washington was coming! The wary commander-in-chief, pretending plans against New York, had led Sir Henry Clinton to recall part of his force from the Chesapeake and then turning front, had marched with speed for Virginia, where Cornwallis lay with all his army, in the elbow of the bay, leisurely fortifying.

Back of this swift march of four hundred miles lay vital tidings. A new French fleet was on its way to the Chesapeake. Lafayette drew his troops between the British and a retreat into the Carolinas; the patriot army was hastening down upon them from the north. Would Clinton scent danger and send ships to snatch Cornwallis from the closing jaws? Or would the French fleet come in time to block the sea way out?

But Virginia knew nothing of this at first. She only knew that Washington was coming.

One night Anne was awakened to an unusual sight. Out on the jasper-colored river came a succession of huge barges and from them, above the plash of oars and creak of cordage, rose the hum of a multitude. She leaned far from the window to listen. How like phantom shadows the bristling floats swept past! "What can it be?" she cried.

"'Tis the French, come in the fleet of De Grasse,"

said Mr. Burwell. "It must now be at anchor in Hampton Roads. Thank God! Thank God!"

There was a thrill of rejoicing in his tone, but Anne's heart beat painfully. Hope and help were come to her land—to Virginia the beautiful, the tragic, the tender. The first promise of this help had come to it when Strong Arm called to Counsel and Counsel to Strong Arm, and both feared to answer. And he who bore that message? Denied by her lips that called to him, dishonored by her hand that ached for a touch of him—what thought now had his heart for her?

The dark shapes passed on to the notch of Jamestown Island that night and disgorged an army. Silently they filed up Archer's Hope Creek and drew, with Lafayette's troops, the fatal cordon about York-town.

The fleet that brought them lay in the river mouth below, and when the British ships which Cornwallis had been promised hove to that same day with fourteen hundred guns, De Grasse's watchful frigates battered them away.

The would-be rescuers sailed back, and Cornwallis woke to find himself entrapped.

On the day Washington's allied armies marched into Williamsburg, Anne stood with Colonel Tillot-

son on the steps of the Capitol to see them pass. The Continentals were ragged, worn with painful marches in heat and rain, with stained rags covering old wounds, but with the unquenchable resolve in their faces. Rochambeau's French were uniformed in white, with rose-colored facings, eager, debonair, carrying gold-wrought standards that caught the sun.

Anne watched through smarting eyes. Somewhere, waiting these, among those other troops lying panting against the hills nearer York-town, was the one face which meant the whole war—the whole world —to her!

Two red weeks followed for Williamsburg—weeks when the investing cannon so near vomited thunder unceasingly—when the sky at night was lurid with the flame of mortars—when wagons, black with powder and stained with cruel splotches of rusty fallow-brown, crawled in a never-ending caravan to the improvised hospital there, where Doctor Craik, Washington's chief surgeon, toiled sleeplessly with lint and knife. Many Virginia women worked with him, winding bandages, dressing wounds, reading to the sick who multiplied so rapidly in that fierce fortnight while the parallels of the allied forces crept nearer, even nearer, to the spitting ramparts of the beleaguered town. Among these workers was Anne.

She read the casualty lists each day with dread, fearing always that one name.

And how they labored at the front—those tattered, earnest men in their first siege, with chain-shot whizzing over their heads and shells bursting among them. Sharpening stakes, making fascines, gabions, hurdles, saucissons, filling sand-bags, sweating with marl-buckets and grubbing-hoes—muddy as ditchers, tireless, unswerving.

Steadily, under the enemy's fire, batteries rose along the parallels. From one to another of these rode Knox, placing his gunners, his round, jovial face creased in smiles, in his element at last. And these gunners for five days, from sunrise to sunset, hurled iron and flame upon the defenses.

The inner parallels crept toward the river-bank, tightening the line. Here their advance was stayed by a redoubt on the high bank, thirty feet above the river. It had resisted all the force of the gunners.

"If we take that redoubt," said Washington to Knox on the afternoon of the fifth day of the bombardment, "Cornwallis must surrender."

Colonel Armand, with a handful of his troopers, reconnoitered that afternoon on the right, near the river and in advance of the foremost American battery. From the redoubts, far to the left, came a scat-

tering whistle of grape, and now and then the grinding belch of a carronade. The air was full of the heavy, pungent smell of burned powder and the reeking scent of fresh-turned earth.

His gaze had sought the wide river for a moment and turned up the stream, with a look that was fixed and far away.

"A prisoner, coming from the town, captured under the river bank, sir."

The voice recalled him. "Bring him here."

The man brought before him looked with a start, then smiled, with a gleam of mockery on his ruddy lips. Armand's face was immovable.

"Still the same, Colonel," the newcomer flaunted, with a glance at the other's uniform. "Still Captain Jarrat. My Philadelphia wound, as you see, proved not so bad. I am on my way now out of the precious rat-trap yonder. I have small liking for these peculiar delays—suppose you scribble me a pass through the lines."

"Sergeant," said Armand, "take this man to the trench and give him ten minutes to go back to his own redoubts."

A swarthy red came to Jarrat's face. "I would speak with you alone a moment. I have a communication to make."

At Armand's nod the others fell back. "What is your communication?" he asked sternly.

"You have covered your past very well, but I know you. Do you remember that day at the Congress? Well, I am not dumb. Now, will you let me go?"

For answer Armand recalled his sergeant. "Give this man ten lashes," he commanded, "before you start him from the trench."

Jarrat leaped back snarling like a fox at bay. "You would dare?"

"Aye," said Armand slowly. "One for each stroke you gave the bondwoman at Gladden Hall."

The prisoner multiplied imprecations as they prepared his punishment, but took the blows in stony silence. Then he walked to the trench, tied a kerchief about his arm and, shaking his fist with a last livid curse at his captor, fled toward the fortifications.

That evening General Moses Hazen sat in his tent, the headquarters nearest the firing line on the right rear of the investing trenches, reading a closely written note. The handwriting, though unfamiliar to him, was that of Captain Jarrat. As he read and re-read it, lines of perplexity came into his strong Canadian face.

"How was this brought?" he asked his orderly.

"With a despatch-flag from the eastern redoubt, sir," was the answer.

He was still perusing it when the orderly entered the tent to announce Colonel Armand. The general swore softly, crumpled the letter in his hand, hesitated, then nodded assent. His eyes were sharp-gray, in-set, and they fixed themselves intently on the officer as he entered.

"I am informed, General Hazen," said Armand saluting, "that you have in charge the make-up of a column which will storm the enemy's tenth redoubt to-night."

"Yes."

"I wish to volunteer."

The general's keen eyes looked into Armand's steady ones. Then he rumpled his wig in thought.

"I accept your services," he said at length. "Colonel Alexander Hamilton will be in command. You will report to him at the right of the first parallel at dusk."

As the other passed out, the general smoothed open the letter again. "And yet . . ," he said slowly to himself, "Benedict Arnold was also a brave man . . . "

At dusk in the muck-black trenches lay four hundred men, compact, wide-eyed, waiting the signal for

storming. The earth-silence was profound, and through it their breathing swelled like a ghostly tide. The hanging sky formed a whitish arch under which all movements seemed at a distance vague and formless. A spattering rain was dropping and fitful jags of lightning knifed the low clouds. From the rear, an occasional mortar was groaning and from time to time a fiery rocket trail passed with a raucous shrieking overhead—a shot from the British batteries.

Nearest the open lay a little group of twenty; it was the forlorn hope, volunteers all, who were to lead the column. One of these was Colonel Armand.

As they lay waiting, somewhere on the French left a clear voice began to sing, low and penetrating between the hoarse mutterings. Another took it up, then another, until fifty were chanting in unison. It was a song which was later to be known as *"Les Travaux du Camp,"* sung now in cheer for the attacking battalions:

"Allons, travaillons,
Travaillons, braves patriotes;
Allons, pressons,
Poussons vivement nos despotes
Ici trouveront leurs tombeaux."

The melody died with the explosion of a shell, another, then four in rapid succession.

At the signal, the twenty rose as one man and hurled forward on a run. A hundred paces and a challenge rang out—then the parapets opened in spurting gusts of death.

The handful stayed for no sappers but scaled the abatis, leaped the ditch and rushed upon the works with their spontoons. Above them, as they climbed, were hammering oaths, stabbing steel and leaning, thrusting forms.

The first point-blank discharge had gone to waste, and Armand, dragging a grenadier headlong down by the shoulders, leaped the wall and cleared a space between two guns with his saber—a space filled a moment after by the inrush of the supporting battalion. The fight became a pandemonium of cries, grapples and yellow flashes. The bleeding shadows swelled instantly full of a vast, red smoke, of yells, of curses, of men trampled struggling, grunting, underfoot.

Armand, lunging, turned suddenly upon a snaky form creeping in the shadow of the gun; when seen, the man pressed back into the human surge, Armand trailing him, panther-like. To the latter's saber, he opposed a sword and used it well, but gave way steadily before the fury of Armand's attack—re-

treating across the space between the rear of the redoubt and the river-bank, scarce ten yards in width —an acre now a *mêlée* of hand-to-hand encounters with sword, clubbed-musket and bayonet.

"Surrender!" cried Armand.

For answer the other avoided a thrust and twisted to one side, and Armand, with the rush, feeling loose ground crumble under his feet, realized suddenly that he was on the very marge of the high bank.

At the instant a new uproar arose. Through and over the space plunged the third detachment sent to attack the redoubt in reverse.

The impact sent a soldier tumbling at Armand's feet as he sprang to regain his footing, and taking advantage of the instant, his assailant hurled himself upon him.

As they toppled in the clinch, Armand recognized his foe.

"Now, damn you . . ," shrieked Jarrat. Then they fell.

The rush had carried the position and within two hours, tireless Continental spades had enclosed it within the second parallel, a result which carried consternation to York-town, where later in the evening, in Cornwallis's headquarters,—now Gov-

ernor Nelson's mansion, since the American gunners had tumbled his first selection about his ears,—a group of aides were assembled discussing the situation.

With them sat Colonel Lord Chetwynde, lately arrived with messages from Sir Henry Clinton at New York.

The conversation was interrupted by the entrance of Jarrat, followed by two Hessians bearing a stretcher. He addressed himself to Lord Chetwynde.

"Will your Lordship pardon me if I ask a view of this man?" He pointed to the unconscious form upon the sagging canvas.

"I am no surgeon," said his Lordship, languidly.

"He needs no treatment," Jarrat answered. "'Tis but a chance tumble on the head. He is a prisoner taken to-night."

"What the devil York-town wants of prisoners I can't see!" drawled the other. "Colonel Dundas is in charge of the barrack, I believe. Why bring him to me?"

"For your identification. Colonel Dundas wishes certain verification. This man escaped, while under your sentence, from the Duchess of Gordon in seventy-six."

The other bent his eyes upon the white face on the stretcher, then looked at Jarrat.

"Your Lordship recognizes him?"

"Yes," said Lord Chetwynde slowly, and turned away. He sat silent after Jarrat and his relay had departed.

"Of what are you thinking, my Lord?" asked one of the younger aides.

"I was thinking," responded the other, lighting a cigarette, "of a strange snake I have heard of here in America. The Indians call it 'copper-head.' It is said it will lie in wait for a man for months."

Next morning a despatch started from Cornwallis to Clinton:

"Last evening, the enemy carried my advanced redoubt on the left; the situation of the place is, therefore, so precarious that I can not recommend that the fleet and army should run any great risk in endeavoring to save us."

And so at ten o'clock on the morning of the seventeenth of October, in the thunder of the guns, a red-coated drummer appeared on the left parapet of the invested town. He stood silhouetted against the dun smoke-clouds, beating a message that was lost in the roar.

But with the sight the cannonading fell silent. The smoke lifted, the musketry barked no more. And then the sound came clear, as sweet as cool rain in a fiery desert—he was beating the long "parley."

When the distant groanings died away in the air, Williamsburg came out of doors to listen and wonder and rejoice. There, in the afternoon, Anne met Henry riding into Duke of Gloucester Street with a deeper pain than she had ever seen in his dark face.

"What is it? What is it? she cried. "Ah, he was only reported missing—missing! You are not going to tell me he is dead?"

"Be brave," he answered.

Then he told her as gently as he could. One of Cornwallis's messengers had brought out the report that one Louis Armand, captured two days before, was under condemnation in York-town to die that night at sunset.

She heard him with wide, terror-struck eyes.

"To die!" she cried. "He was captured then. Let them believe what they may, he is a Continental officer—a prisoner of war! They can not kill him. Why, they are negotiating now for surrender! I shall go to General Washington—he will not let them!"

He shook his head very gravely.

"Anne," he said, "my poor, dear child! The general officers of the American line know. They would not interfere. Jarrat's deviltry has won at last. He sent a letter out of York-town three days ago to General Hazen, denouncing Colonel Armand."

CHAPTER XXII

A PARLEY WITH DEATH

In little time Anne was mounted and on her way to the field of York-town, where the allied armies lay awaiting the outcome of that flag of truce.

Joy rested over all the wide camps, but there was none in her heart. She was conscious only of a dreadful, numbing ache and a desperate necessity to see him once more—to tell him. She had no further plan. The note she carried from Henry brought her without delay to the officer of the day, and the personal request it contained was not to be denied.

The sun was low when she passed the inner works and entered York-town between battered walls and gouged earth-mounds which testified to the fierceness of the fire rained upon the British by Ferguson's and Machin's batteries. All about her were honeycombed streets cluttered with rich furniture, empty knapsacks, books, fragments of shells, iron caltrops, carcasses of men and horses, and horrors beyond description.

But she scarcely saw them. He was to die this night—this night—and the time was so pitifully short. The years he had fought must count for naught; all vanished before the weight of that one long-passed Philadelphia afternoon. What should have been his hour of triumph had become his hour of shame. And it was by her act!

The thought made her shudder as if with an ague. It seemed to her that God must have been blotted from the heavens—that there was no hope, no good, nothing but a colossal Fate-wheel which was rolling to crush Armand and her.

Where were the prisoners kept? She asked some one who directed her to a barrack at the northern end of the town. Thither she pushed her way over foul refuse heaps and fetid ditches, through crowds of soldiers shouting loathsome doggerel, who jeered and caught at her, and past gold-braided officers who cursed them savagely and made place. She noted none of these.

At the barrack-entrance she met her first rebuff when a sentry barred her way.

"You have a prisoner," she explained, her breath fluttering. "His name is Armand . . I would see him."

He answered only with an uncomprehending stare. As he turned, she tried to pass through, but he

thrust his musket across the door with an angry Hessian grunt. A knot of soldiers tossed some German phrases to him from behind her and he smiled at them stolidly over her head.

Then she became aware of a more kindly military face in the opening behind him. A hand touched the Hessian's shoulder, he faced about, saluted and moved off, and the knot of stragglers melted away.

"I am Colonel Dundas," stated the officer in the door-way. "Have you permission to see the prisoner?"

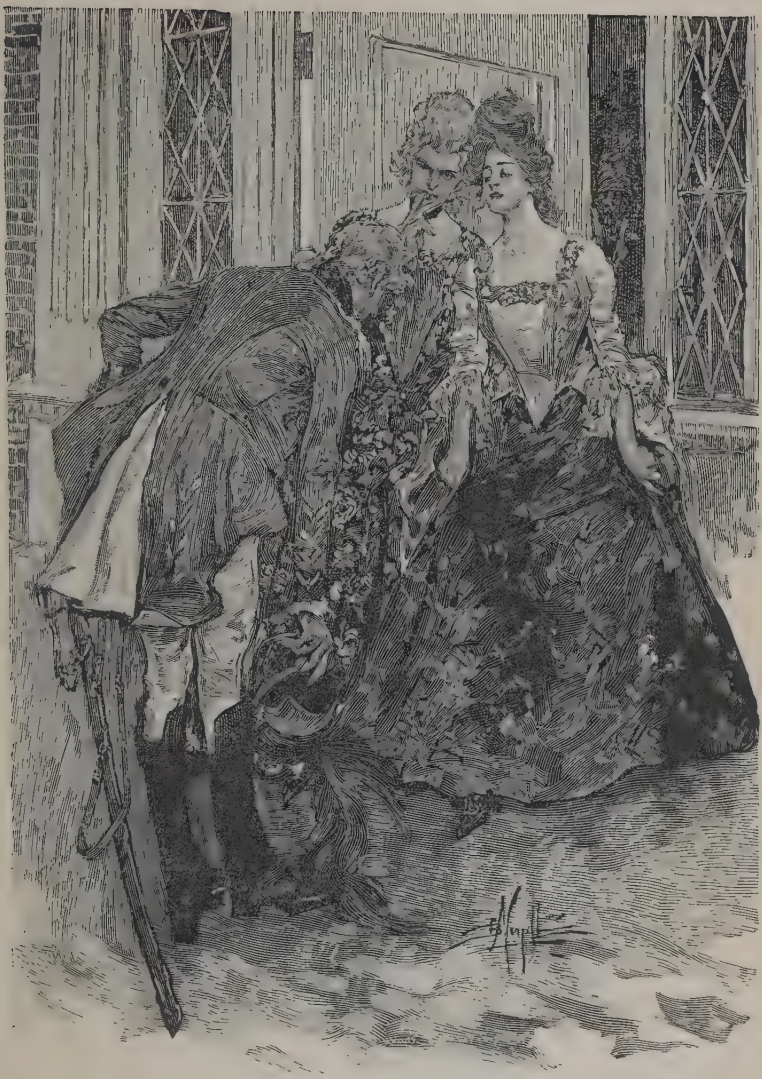
"No," she replied pathetically.

"This is a special order. None save the commander-in-chief can give such leave."

She sat down on the stone step, her eyes half-closed, shaken by a dry sob. Not even to see him. It was ghastly!

Colonel Dundas was struck with her pallor. He was a gentleman and humane. "The prisoner who dies to-night is not under a recent condemnation, Mistress," he said, not unkindly. "And 'tis said he now holds the rank of colonel in the American army. Mayhap the Continentals will yet make protest."

She looked up with wide, miserable eyes. How could she explain it all to him! "There is no time —no time," she said with heavy lips.



He had turned away, but her voice recalled him. "Where is Cornwallis's headquarters? Tell me, quick."

"In the Nelson mansion," he answered. "Hope not on that, though. Surrender is deliberated and the earl is under great strain."

"But he will at least see me?"

He shook his head doubtfully. "You have still an hour."

Still an hour! How horrible to measure a life by minutes! Colonel Dundas watched her go with a frown of pity. War seemed more than stern to him at that moment.

Then he entered the door and sent for a chaplain to hold himself in readiness.

A sickness had climbed into Anne's throat before she reached the house. For a time she got no farther than the outer door; at length an officer, doubtless by reason of her evident distress, gave her a chair in what had been the drawing-room. Scores of times she had sat in that self-same room, as gay as any guest. That she should be there now, on such an errand, seemed some hideous mockery of truth.

The British commander had before him General Washington's ultimatum as to terms of surrender —could see no one. So they told her, but she

would not be satisfied. Her errand was a matter of life and death—concerned an execution within an hour. Twice the officer who had given her the chair went into the inner room; the second time he returned with a flush of mortification on his face.

"I dare not ask again," he told her.

She came out into the street at last when the sun was gathering crimson to its fall, her whole mind numbed, her body wrenching with nervous agony, and with bruised shadows beneath her burning eyes. Instinctively she started in the direction of the barrack, and as she walked with uncertain footsteps, her fingers went twisting a slip of paper they found in the pocket of her gown. Some soldiers were boiling a pot over a street fire of split boards, and as she passed them, with the look of a sleep-walker, she drew the paper out and looked at it.

Instantly a great thrill went through her to the tips of her fingers, and her cheeks rushed into flame. It was the hasty scrawl given her at Gladden Hall by Lord Cornwallis the day she had gone to him for John-the-Baptist.

This is what she read:

"My Dear Dundas: I suppose we must let the lady have her prisoner. Just give them passes out. *Cornwallis."*

She stood still a moment, afraid of the beating of her heart, cherishing a thought that was like a white coal in her brain. If she could! The soldiers were looking at her curiously, for women were rare in the town. If she could!

Then, clasping the paper to her breast, she ran with winged feet toward the barrack. As she neared the river-bank the sun was a half-disk of deep orange-red.

The Hessian sentry was still on guard. But he had seen his colonel's previous greeting, and as she hastened up the steps he threw the door wide and she ran through the corridor straight into Dundas's presence. He was sitting at his table, and a subaltern had just entered for instructions.

"I have it! I have it!" she cried, and laughed —laughed joyfully with her heart quaking and fainting.

"You have it? I *am* glad." Dundas reached for the paper and read it smiling. "General Cornwallis is surely occupied; he has e'en forgot to date it. However . . " He struck a bell. "Sergeant, tell Major Needham his file will not be required to-night, and bring the prisoner Armand, fully clothed, to me."

She scarce heard what followed save to realize in a vague way that he was marveling at her miracle.

But everything else vanished as Armand entered the room.

"Prisoner," Colonel Dundas announced, "I am ordered to set you at liberty. You owe so much clemency to this lady who has interceded with Lord Cornwallis."

Armand had been pale when he entered; having seen her, his face had grown quite colorless. He stood wordless, his shoulders lifting in a long, deep-drawn breath.

"Here is a double pass," continued Dundas. "That, I believe, ends my hospitality." He rose and bowed while the sergeant opened the door and the two passed out into the noisome, brawling street.

The sun had set—the sky's golden ivory still moist for the first stroke of night's soft brush to paint in the stars. A thin new moon tilted over the musty purple of the river. Reaction was come. She shivered again and put out a hand toward him.

"Speak to me," she whispered.

"Rather," he said, "tell me at what house I can safely leave you."

"Leave me?"

"Aye. You have made me take my life at your hand. Spare me further humiliation if you can."

She had not thought of this emergency. Delay would spoil all. And even if he reached the American lines—ah! none knew better than she why he should not go there.

"I am in danger," she invented breathlessly. "In great danger—I can not explain now—here in York-town. I have not a friend within the walls, no spot where I can be safe. I ask you to take me away."

"Let us go, then, toward the bastions," he said turning.

"No, no!" She caught at his arm. "I can not go into the American camp. Bethink you, 'tis night. I must get to Gladden Hall. See—here is the river. 'Tis but a few miles. Could you row me so far, think you, against the current?"

He did not reply, but led the way to a path which zigzagged down the bluff to the river. It was the spot where they had first met. Then the long stretch had bristled with shipping; now the wharves had been pulled up to build rat-rotted lean-to's, the bank was hollowed with dug-out shelters from the shells, wherein wounded soldiers played at cards by new-lit candles, and the water's edge was a jumble of ownerless barges and periaugers, and a tohubohu of shouts and wranglings. Along the line of craft, where the tide scum shuddered in with spran-

gles of sea-weed and chunks of wreckage, sentries patrolled ceaselessly with keen outlook for river deserters.

Armand chose a narrow skiff, found two oars for it, and placed her in the stern as a lieutenant examined their pass. Then, with a strong shove, he sent the boat darting out on to the broad, smooth, unrippling current.

It had scarce drawn well away when a figure blundered down the bank.

"Call that boat in!" he cried, "or have the sentries fire on it. That man's name is Armand; he is an escaping prisoner."

"Oh, no, Captain Jarrat," returned the lieutenant composedly. "You have the name all right, but he had a pass signed by Lieutenant-Colonel Dundas. I know the signature well enough. This siege routine is playing the devil with your nerves, Captain."

"A pass!" shouted Jarrat frantically. "By the ghost!" and went up the bank on a run.

Colonel Dundas was gone from the barrack, and Jarrat could no more get speech with Cornwallis than could Anne a half-hour before. But the conference at headquarters ended while Jarrat waited, and the earl came out in no pretty humor. As luck would have it, Colonel Dundas was with him.

There followed an interesting scene, which left Lord Cornwallis in nastier mood than ever.

"She fooled Tarleton once," he swore. "Now 'tis you, Dundas. From under your very nose, too, by the Lord!"

And Dundas, perspiring, wholly astonished, hastened to order a long-boat in pursuit of the skiff, on the bare chance of overhauling the fugitives before they reached the American front.

Jarrat, however, made a different calculation.

His cobra hate, inflamed by the sight of Anne in the boat, leaped to a rapid conclusion. She had discovered that Armand had been exposed; they had taken the river way—the only way to avoid the Americans. So he argued. And whither did they fly? Where else than to Gladden Hall, now deserted, where she thought to conceal him till the hue and cry passed—where she may have hidden horses. The long-boat would probably be halted by the shore pickets—the skiff might slip through.

Two hours after this ratiocination Jarrat was caught and held on the right skirt of the besieging army as a deserter from the town and forthwith he demanded to be taken to General Hazen's headquarters.

There the general, seated in his tent, had just penned the last page of a letter:

"On the 14th, they had another Drobing.

"To-day, 17th, Ld Cornwallis sent a flag requesting a cessan of arms & 2 Commissnrs to form a Capitulation for the Army & the surrender of the shiping & posts of York & Gloster. Thus has the Earl been brot to anchor in the height of his career. My next shall be more particular, in the meantime be assurd of the Sincerity of yr real friend and Obdt Humble Servt."

He was shaking the sand-box over the still wet signature when the captive was brought in.

"Three days ago," Jarrat began, "I had the honor to send to you a letter from the town in regard to a certain Continental officer."

The general sent the others out of hearing and bent his gray-black brows. "I have to-day heard of his condemnation," he said. "He is dead then. He has atoned. So far as I am concerned, his past shall be buried with him."

"But if," Jarrat continued—"if I should tell you that he is not dead; that the report of his condemnation was a trick; that he was not captured in the first place, but used the night attack to penetrate within York-town without exciting suspicion, and so carry to Cornwallis full plans of the American works . . . "

"Your proof of this?" asked Hazen, his teeth set like a vise.

"The proof is that this very night he has been smuggled out beyond the Continental lines, and lies at this moment in hiding in a house a half-dozen miles from here, waiting escape."

"Where is the house?" thundered the other.

Jarrat's lean lips smiled. "Pardon me if I make terms. In return for my freedom I will guide a detachment to his burrow."

"An this be true . . " said Hazen. He hesitated, but only for a moment. Then he called a sharp direction to his orderly.

"I must see General Lafayette," he said to Jarrat. "The cavalry legion is no part of my brigade. Colonel Armand was under division orders only."

But the marquis was making a tour of the works with the commander-in-chief and could not be found.

"It must not wait," fumed Jarrat. "He will be off."

General Hazen sat down and wrote a hurried order. "An he is not there, why, 'twill be merely a ride for naught," he mused. "An he is, there will be small question."

"Major Woodson," he said, as a staff-officer appeared, "take a relay of a dozen men immediately,

and go to the house this prisoner will show you. Should you find there Colonel Armand, of the cavalry legion, arrest him."

"An he resists . . . " said Jarrat.

"The usual orders," the general answered. "Go!"

CHAPTER XXIII

BEHIND THE BARRICADE

As the skiff slipped out from the confusion of the town-edge, the moon, lifted like a paper sickle, silvered all the misty distance. A mile away, across the broad expanse, Anne saw the twinkling lights of Gloucester, and to her left, the camp-fires under the river-bank slipping slowly back. But the current was steady and their progress necessarily slow. Ahead loomed the massive star-shaped Fusileer's Redoubt, with the British frigate Guadaloupe moored some way outside, and, passing, she clenched her hands till the nails struck purple crescents in her palms in a dumb terror of pursuit or alarm.

They were scarce come opposite this when a shot, a shout and a sound of oars tumbled upon thwarts came clearly over the water behind them.

"They have found it out," she cried. "Row hard! Oh, would that I could help you!"

"Found out what?"

"I must tell you the truth. I have procured

your escape by a trick. 'Twas not a true release which I brought to the barrack. 'Twas false; they are like to discover it at any moment and pursue us."

He stopped rowing. "You did that—for me? You spoke falsely when you said you were in terrible danger?"

"Row," she pleaded, leaning forward from the stern. "Stop not an instant. I have fooled Cornwallis. Think you he will forget that? Or, if they take us, that I shall go scot-free? Would you see me in a cell?"

The boat shot forward with a jerk that made her catch her breath.

"Where are you heading?" she asked presently, for he had turned in shore.

"The French battery is just ahead. 'Tis the extreme left of the circling Continental front. Beyond that is safety, Mademoiselle."

"I will not land there. You must pass the American lines. You must take me home to Gladden Hall."

"But . . "

"Row, row!"

"I beg you to allow us to land," he urged. "The regiment of the Gâtinais lies behind that bluff; they will not dare pursue into the French trenches."

"An you are afraid—"

Oh, what it cost her heart to say that!

Armand bent to the oars and increased his speed. Neither spoke. She was suffering a like apprehension now of arousing the American pickets on the shore. At any other time, doubtless, there would have been challenges, but on this night, the first of many weeks, the Continentals rested and made merry, waiting the signing of the articles of surrender. The skiff passed the danger point and for a while there was no sound save the slap of tiny waves like children's hands against the stem, and the muffled din of the pursuit, which drew on with dogged persistency.

"They will not fire," she said at length, in a low voice, "for fear of arousing the Americans. They have a ship's-boat full, but they row crooked and uneven. Yet they come on fast—fast. Tell me—could we get back to the Continental works?"

"'Tis impossible now; they are between us and them. Gladden Hall is the nearest refuge."

"Are you certain?"

"Yes, Mademoiselle."

"Listen," she confessed then; "I have deceived you. I made you take me past the Continental line because . . . because you yourself can not go there. You *must* not go there. 'Tis not only the

British who would seize you now. Ah, do you not understand? You have been denounced. 'Tis known that you are the same who, they think, would have misled the Congress."

"Informed against?" he said. "Again?"

"Oh, what a ghastly thing for you to say to me! 'Twas Jarrat—Jarrat. Row ashore, and—fly."

"Where?"

"Anywhere, anywhere," she cried, wildly, "only so it be to safety! Haste! They gain on us."

"If we land they are certain to take us. You can not go afoot as fast as they."

"I shall not go—you shall leave me there. Row! Row!"

"And why should you care for my life?"

"Ah, will you stay when my heart is breaking? There is no time to talk now. What is anything they may do beside your life? I beseech you . . I command you to run in. I never intended you to take me farther."

"You would be safe if we could reach Gladden Hall," he said. Then he stood up and threw off his coat.

Her tears came at this. "There is no one at the Hall to protect," she wept. "Not a slave to beat them back. Not a weapon. Tarleton sacked it.

Ah, you do not believe me, because I deceived you before! But this is the truth—I swear it is the truth!"

He made no answer, but set the boat's bow straight up the stream and rowed as she had never seen a man row before. She felt the timbers shiver and creak, heard the deep in-take of his breath and saw the splendid play of the arm muscles beneath his shirt-sleeve. Then, entering, ever more insistent, came the creak of the pursuing craft.

The moonlight fell whitely on the shore they skirted. Two miles—three miles—past the shallows of King's Creek and Corbin's point. Every tongue of land, every wedge of forest, how well she knew them! But how slowly they fell behind! There was no longer danger of arousing the Continental pickets, and the pursuers' voices came clearly, gibing at the error of their prisoner which had carried him past the line of safety and made his taking certain. Once Anne heard the officer who led give sharp command to put down a gun.

A scant hundred yards was all there was between the two boats when Armand sprang upon the wharf of Gladden Hall. "Leave me!" she begged faintly, "and save yourself. You have yet time."

"Give me your hand," he commanded peremptorily. He took it and led her running up the sloping lawn.

Its unkempt forlornness was softened by the kindly moonlight, and not until they reached the front of the house did its gray desolateness become all at once apparent. The panes in the windows were broken, the white pillars battered, the front door swinging, the yard unsightly with rubbish.

"'Tis deserted!" Despair was in his tone.

"I told you that."

"Are there no horses?"

"The barns are burned. Leave me, leave me, and go!"

He hurried her to the front door and they entered, hearing as they did so the larger boat bump the planking. Without a word, he shot home the bolts in the great door, and drew her into the dining-room, now over-scattered with broken crockery. He locked both doors of this room, smashed the sashes of the porch windows with a chair, brought together the heavy outer blinds and slid the bars. As he fastened the second, the pursuers came tumbling to the porch. Anne, meantime, taking a clue from him, had managed to fasten one of the windows in the opposite side. He sprang to secure

the other before the soldiers reached the back of the house.

This shut out the last of the moonlight and the room became a blank darkness. Outside was a deadened clamor, curses and shouts to fetch ship's lanterns and search the empty quarters for an ax. Anne could hear Armand's convulsive breathing.

She had groped her way to the sideboard and opened its candle drawer. A tiny half-inch end rewarded her. Flint and steel still hung in their accustomed place; she struck them and lighted the wick with trembling hands.

As she did so, a heavy body came hurtling against the other side of the inner door. "Better give up, you weasel," panted a voice.

Armand answered loudly: "If I do, will you promise to let the lady go?"

"No, no," Anne besought in an agony. "You shall not give yourself up to them! They would not hold to such a promise."

With her cry, however, whirled a scramble of curses. "We'll lay you by the heels and take the girl back, too, damn you!" and a rain of blows descended on the door, while a crash against one of the blinds shook the wall.

Leaping back, Armand dragged out the heavy

mahogany sideboard, now slashed and dinted, and set it against one door. The other he reinforced with the overturned table, and bound this to its place with the twisted window-curtains. Last, he wrenched an iron from the fireplace and stood waiting. At the same moment the candle-end collapsed, the wick dropped, flickered and went out, and darkness fell around them again.

A lull had come in the attack; evidently a consultation was being held. The blackness seemed to lie upon Anne's soul like a heavy weight, and Armand's silence became unbearable.

"What shall we do?" she asked dully. "We can not hold out for long."

But there was no reply.

"I—I am so frightened," she said piteously. "'Tis dark! Come to me, Louis."

She listened, but he made no stir.

"You will not come to me . . will not pity, or comfort me?" she entreated through the void. "Yet to-night I tried to save your life."

"For what end? You who took from it all that makes life sweet! I trusted you!" She shrank at the ring of scorn in his voice. "I trusted you!"

"And I you," she answered. "I loved and hoped and trusted, too. After they took you from here that evening, every night, when I went to bed I

said a prayer and kissed my poor hand to you in the dark. And I have done so every night since then —every night, Louis."

Something like a sob sounded in the room and she stretched out her arms toward it.

"I tried to keep my promise. You remember when they lashed the bondwoman? She woke with a crazed brain, and the packet . . your packet . . was gone. All those months I searched and found it at last by chance. I did not get to Philadelphia with it till—that morning."

There was no further answer and she slipped on her knees, feeling a yearning that was like a poignant sickness.

"You must hear," she went on pleadingly, clasping her fingers, "and believe me, or my heart will break. Fate put me in the recess of the window at the Red Lion Tavern, Louis. I saw Jarrat give you the forged message . . . saw you fight and run him through. I knew you were true—true to your master's honor and your own."

"You accused me!" The words stung her. "Accused me to the Continentals!"

"Listen. Listen to me!" she prayed desperately. "I must tell you it all now . . . now at the end. Jarrat showed me the paper—the contract that bound you to give your life—your life! And I

knew you would do it! Oh, what that meant! I would have given my own life a hundred times to prevent it. Can you think what it cost me to stand in that room and say that . . . that, of you? Your face was dreadful! I thought I should die when you looked at me!"

"So, you killed my honor!"

"No, no! Not that—I did not mean that, Louis! I had such little time to think—such small time to reason. I had only time to feel—to feel as a woman will, and to act. I had to defeat the contract to keep you from going back to the prison—to death. I thought I could clear you at the last, I who knew you were true, because I had the packet—the true message. Only I promised my soul that I should not speak within the month."

Her voice broke a little here, then went on in a sudden pathos of pleading: "What know we women of soldier's duty or soldier's honor—we who are cherished and toasted all our lives? We know only to love, to follow—and—and—to save what we love, in spite of all the world!"

There was a movement now—a step.

"Then I took the packet, Louis, into the Congress to Doctor Franklin that very hour, and I could not tell you what I had done . . . and

you escaped them. I thought you had gone to your death. And you didn't know! You never knew. Oh," she sobbed, "if you would only forgive me, only touch me, only lay your hand on my head—"

She heard a stumble, a smothered cry. The iron bar clanged against the floor. An arm, groping, trembling, touched her wet cheek.

"My God! And I doubted you!" Armand's voice thrilled her in a great burst of grief-wound joy. "You gave the message? My darling—my darling!"

She felt herself caught up in his arms in the dark, shuddering, crying, panting incoherent phrases, kissing his face, his rough coat, his epaulets, strangling with fierce terror and ecstasy of love, and feeling his passion strain and fold her. It seemed to her that all of life and death was concentrated in that one embrace—that nothing existed in the world but the delirium of that single sweet-bitter moment.

A medley of shouts and ax-blows on both of the doors at one time sent her into quick spasms of dread. A panel splintered; a shaft of light and an arm thrust in. Armand released her, struck once with the iron bar, and the man fell back cursing with a broken arm.

"Shoot!" one shouted. "Are we to be bayed by this rat?"

"Don't fire," came the response. The order was imperative.

The blows began again. Another panel crashed and the holes let in more light. It fell upon Anne's pallid lips and showed her Armand's white sleeves and pale face, set, but calm. A blow struck the lock of the other door; it yielded and the oak swung in against the stout sideboard.

Anne felt her limbs grow cold.

"Lost, lost!" she murmured, and leaned dumbly against the wainscoting.

Suddenly a fusillade of musketry woke the echoes out of doors and a crisp shout garnished it. "File out of that hall, and lay down arms."

There arose a Saturnalia of revilement from the hall; then as it died, the voice asked: "What mean these active hostilities in a period of armistice?"

"'Tis a sortie for an escaped prisoner!" came the jarring mirth of Jarrat. "Well, Major, I think you will have need yourself for all the prisoners to be found here."

Anne had gone from one terror to another and bitterer one. "The Continentals!" she moaned.

The crisp voice approached the splintered door. "Colonel Armand," it said, "I arrest you in the

name of the United States of America. Do you surrender?"

"By whose orders?"

"The general's commanding the Second Brigade."

"I am a colonel of independent cavalry," answered Armand clearly. "I acknowledge orders only from the division commander."

Jarrat laughed.

Sharp directions followed. The axes cut wider fissures in the panels, and through these muskets obtruded and took aim. "My orders are to take you alive, to shoot if you resist. I give you five minutes to open that door."

Anne ran to Armand and threw herself into his arms. "Ah, you must not! For God's sake, give yourself up! I will tell it all to General Washington. He will hear and believe me . . I will . . "

"Think you it would be credited?" he asked gently. "And if not . . "

She clung to him, weeping. "But you have fought so. There is that! Oh, 'twill give me your life—your life. That is all I want! I care not for shame or report, so I know it is not true! Ah, pity me! And 'tis my fault! Oh, this must be a hideous dream come to punish me!"

"I used to dream," he said, "of you and me as wed . . in honor."

"Oh, I would wed you in dishonor, in disgrace, in death! See," she said hurriedly, "here is my mother's wedding-ring. I have always worn it about my neck. I love you! I love you!" She laid it in his hand.

"Put it upon my finger," she whispered. "Say it after me: 'I, Anne, take thee, Louis, to my wedded husband . . . '"

A strange fire had come into his face.

"'I, Louis," he repeated solemnly, "'take thee, Anne, to my wedded wife . . . '"

"'To have and to hold, from this day forward, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health . . . '"

"'To have and to hold, from this day forward, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health . . . '"

She was sobbing now so that she could scarcely frame the words:

"'To love and to cherish—till death us do—' *join,* Louis! It can not, it shall not part us!"

"My own love!" he said in choked tones, and held her quivering against his breast.

"The time is up," said the voice.

Anne clasped Armand with her young arms—

tightly, desperately, as if her warm, yielding body, her face fragrant with white fragrance, could keep back the death that looked from those muzzles.

His hands disengaged her own to pin to his coat a yellow bauble he had taken from his pocket, and then, as she clung, her strained senses became conscious of a wheeling plunge of horsemen at the porch, hurried steps, a voice shaking with a strange vibration, asking questions in broken English.

At the sound, Armand threw back his head and stood like a stone image.

There was a pause. Then—

"Louis Armand," said the sibilant, halting tongue, "I command you to open thees door! You will not, eh? You know who I am?"

The sideboard fell with a crash, the splintered door tumbled upon it, and Armand stood to attention in the blaze of lantern light. At a glance Anne knew the officer who stood in the doorway, surrounded by a glittering staff. He was the Major-General commanding the division.

"You surrendair, then? Good! An' where, Major Woodson, is the informair who has done such brilliant sairvice to denounce—eh? Come stan' beside me, M'sieu Jarrat, an' let us overwhelm thees villain!"

He advanced a step into the room, his eyes bright on the pair.

"Ha! An' you theenk I have never recognize' you, Charles, all thees time,—me who was your old brother in the *Collège du Plessis!* Me—Lafayette? Take off that wig! Take it off, I tell you!"

Mechanically, Armand put his hand to his head He drew off the black peruke and, all at once unconfined, his brown, curling hair fell to his shoulders, the ends just touching the yellow Cross of St. Louis, which sparkled like a topaz on his breast. The act transformed him. The set mouth was gone, the face all softened to youthfulness.

"Louis Armand, the impostor, seized at Williamsburg!" shouted Jarrat. "Armand who escaped the clutches of the Congress! Armand the traitor, gentlemen. Tear off his cross!"

One of the circle about Lafayette turned facing him with an oath, but the general was before him.

"No!" he cried. "No! Not Louis Armand the traitor! But Charles Louis Armand, Colonel of Armand's Legion and Marquis de la Trouerie!"

There was an instant of silence that turned a Babel behind the speaker.

"A lie!" shouted Jarrat. "A lie. The Marquis de la Trouerie is dead!" Anne had risen trembling, speechless, her eyes fixed and glittering.

"Aye," said Armand sternly, stretching his arm toward him. "He has been dead these five years. But he did not die when you supposed—that was but a play necessary to deceive a dog one would not wish barking at his heels. He called himself a secretary, and you—you jackal—you thought to buy him, a Frenchman, to betray his master, his king, and these Colonies!"

Lafayette laughed like a child. "He bribe' him to be—what you theenk, gentlemen?—to be himself! A rare pleasantree, eh? And the Congress, they theenk he trick them in seventee-six. They would arres' him yet, when he is denounce' —even my General Hazen!"

Jarrat had fallen back, his face black, his fingers convulsively working, his teeth gritting one on another like pebbles in the hand.

Armand's eyes were upon Anne, though he seemed to address all present.

"The marquis had a mission, and he found it to his purpose to—to become himself. He found many thorns in his way. But he found one rose—one rose so pure and fragrant that he wished to gather it. He found a lady—a lady of Virginia, who loved him and believed in him. The marquis was living then. He found himself

in peril and he trusted her. And at last . . . he thought she had betrayed him."

"Ah, my friend," cried Lafayette wistfully, "these long months seeing you, and I have never told you I knew you—never asked wherefore you hid yourself from all. Was I not a friend, Charles?"

"Then," Armand continued, "God forgive his unbelief! then was when he died!"

A great lovely light had come to Anne's face and smiled from her colorless lips—a light more lovely than the aurora over snows.

"Is it true?" she faltered, looking at him in a sort of unbelieving wonder. "Is it true? And will he live again?"

For answer he knelt down at her feet and put his lips to her hand. She felt tears upon it.

When they looked up they were alone in the room. From the yard came the rattle of bridle-chains and the bustle of mounting. Lafayette met them on the threshold.

"I have search' all the place for a—what you call it?—side-saddle," he laughed, "an' there ees one at las'. Colonel, Ma'amselle, you shall ride to town wit' me. We shall all be jus' like big children to-night! Ah, I have forget—you did not know that only two, t'ree hour ago, Cornwallis has surrendair to the Americans!"

CHAPTER XXIV

THE PASSING OF THE OLD REGIME

The last day has come. The trenches are silent. The cannon have done groaning, the snarling small-arms rattle no more. York-town lies as if numbed. The Hampton road, leading out from the British works, is lined with masses of men—the allied troops. They make a great silent hollow way stretching out, a mile long, to the field of surrender.

The left wall of this empty lane is the French troops; to the right are the American. At the head of their respective staffs, the commanding generals sit their horses—Washington, Rochambeau, Lafayette, Steuben and the rest. They are grave and quiet.

Hark! A drum, the blare of a regiment band, and out from those frowning embankments, into the living lane, comes a gay cavalcade. It might be a holiday parade, for they march as proudly

as they had marched victorious into Charles-town. But they have no colors flying.

"This is a harsh article," objected one of the British commissioners, when the surrender was arranged.

"Which article?" inquired Colonel Laurens.

"'The troops shall march out with colors cased.'"

Now the noble Earl of Cornwallis had been a keeper of the Tower of London, in which Tower, at that moment, Colonel Laurens's own father, the first United States Ambassador to Holland, captured on his voyage, lay on a diet of bread and water. The colonel, too, had been made a prisoner at Charles-town with Lincoln's army. He reminded the Briton that the Americans on that occasion had made a brave defense, but were allowed no honors save to march out with colors cased. "This remains an article," he added, "or I cease to be a commissioner."

A poetic retaliation!

And what is the tune these troops are now marching to? It is "The World Turned Upside Down."

Leading them rides General O'Hara, heavy and stolid. He carries the sword of Cornwallis, who is lying in his tent sick with mortification. In

solid formation behind him come the *élite* of the king's army in America. They make a brave show, these eight thousand men in their new red uniforms, distributed this very morning, but there are sad hearts in the lines.

They gaze curiously at the men who have humbled them, drawn up on the right of the way. These are war-worn, dressed in make-shift uniform or no uniform at all, standing with the militia behind them, their faces tanned with exposure, lean from hardship—ah, but standing like soldiers and like conquerors!

No less eagerly do they gaze at the French troops opposite, immaculate in white uniforms, their officers plumed and decorated, their great standards of white silk with golden fleur-de-lis flaunting all along their front. There is St. Simon, small and dark from the sun of the West Indies, Admiral Count de Grasse, thick-set with a double chin and wig with two rows of curls, and Rochambeau with pearl-buttons and ruffles of silk and lace that fall below his finger-tips; and there, too, beside Lauzun, at the head of his cavalry remnant, sits Armand, no longer the grave, impassive figure of the Virginia campaign, but with a face in which a new light and youth has come.

In the field a squadron of hussars has formed a circle, and into this circle each British regiment marches and halts.

"Present arms! Lay down arms! Put off swords and cartridge-boxes!" Von Seybothen, colonel of the Beyreuthian regiment, gives these commands, his cheeks wet with tears. Simple enough words, but how much lies behind them!

The lines form again. Back they move along the same path. Following, the troops that have lined the way merge into a great wave which flows after, enters between the entrenchments and spreads itself in ripples over the town. The long siege is over; York-town is in the hands of the Americans.

An end now to the scanty fare, the fever-full hospitals. The caves dug into the river bank are emptied, the congestion of tents is broken. The entering army brings medicines and the rejoicing Virginians pour provisions into the town. A few days of welcome rest await the captured rank and file—then they are to march off, guarded by militia, to the prison camps at Winchester. Meanwhile, in those houses, whose stout walls are pierced and battered with shells, the French and American commanders vie with one another in dining the courtly officers they have taken.

Once more gay feminine furbelows flit along the

streets—the patriot ladies of Williamsburg press into service the few mounts they have kept hidden from the raiding bands of Tarleton and Simcoe and ride a-horseback to exclaim at the havoc, to be bowed to by the handsome young British officers now on parole, and to grace the toasts of the sprightly banquets.

Camp entertainments are to be the fashion. Washington opens with a dinner of ceremony to General Earl Cornwallis—a wondrous glittering affair of many courses from which the British commander-in-chief goes away with a new and glowing sense of the generosity of his captors.

The second evening there is a quieter gathering in the great drawing-room of Governor Nelson's mansion, wherein, three days before, Anne had pleaded vainly for speech with Cornwallis. And here beneath a jagged hole, draped now with Virginia creeper, where had crashed the first shot from Ferguson's battery, fired by General Washington himself—standing with motherly Mrs. Nelson and with Colonel Tillotson on one hand and Patrick Henry and his pretty, gypsy-dark wife on the other, the Reverend Mr. Evans, the commander's own chaplain, repeats the simple English service which makes the Marquis de la Trouerie and Anne Tillotson man and wife. And who but Marie-Paul-Joseph de

Motier, Marquis de Lafayette, kisses the cheek of the bride?

Passing the self-same mansion that evening, Colonel Tarleton, in company with several French officers with whom he had dined, found the superb horse he rode become all at once unmanageable. The animal reared, whinnied, and at last made for the doorway, where Anne, with a glad cry of "Oh,—Mohammed!" threw her arms about his neck.

The rider sawed at the stubborn mouth angrily, but the girl grasped the rein peremptorily.

"This is my horse," she said firmly.

"Better give him up, Tarleton," said General O'Hara, who was one of the waiting party, and with no good grace, the trooper dismounted and went away afoot.

There followed three perfect days—days, when the air was soft as silk, when a fair sky of tender October blue hung above the grim, clotted fields and bent bow-like to the purple calm of distance—days when they left the flush roistering of Williamsburg far behind them and walked in gold silences, dimly broke by the strong rush of the river.

Into this unendurable joy came a wave of pain—the news that Baron Fairfax lay at Greenway Court, stricken down by illness.

Henry brought the tidings the fourth morning, and at noon of the next day Anne and Armand started by chariot for Alexandria.

Along the way they went, had gone, like a contagion, the out-flame of rejoicing. Alexandria's shipping was a-flutter with flags. And these Anne saw through tears for the old heart which lay far back from sounds of joy, in its mountain hermitage. All those years it had gone without the love that fate had given to her. It had had, as treasure, a loyalty that never faltered, a steadfast allegiance that never wavered, and a lingering, longing love for one who had broken his king's sword and chosen to tread paths that, to the old order, led through treason and dishonor.

Afternoon had fallen in a booming drizzle when they passed Ashby's Gap, and it was dull twilight before they saw the dark jutting chimneys of Greenway Court between the soaked fringes of the trees, and the chariot toiled up the steep ascent from the Shennando.

At the edge of the clearing whose piny skirts were now shrouded in a silver-dull fog of rain, Armand lifted Anne from the chariot. Joe, grown older and lichen-gray, was hobbling from the door.

"How is he, Joe?" she asked quickly. "Is he . . ."

"De good Lawd sut'n'y sent yo', Mis' Anne! Mars' Torm been axin' fo' yo' all de time, en, bress Gord! heah yo' is! He ain' gwine las' much longer. Ain' gwine las' much longer, Mis' Anne!"

He leaned close to her as they crossed to the steps and confided anxiously:

"Yo' do'n know nuttin good fum Mars' Washington, does yo', honey? 'Cause he been 'quirin' 'bout dat boy tell et mos' broke meh ole heart!"

Anne shook her head helplessly. "No, Joe."

"He ain' done nuttin more bad ter hurt Ferginia? Tell Mars' Torm dat, Mis' Anne. Tell Mars' Torm!"

Together they went into the lodge, where, on the self-same couch on which she had seen Armand lying wounded, lay the old baron. His great frame was wasted, and under the edges of his wig at the temples glistened a strand of hair snow-white.

Upon the table, set on edge where his eyes could see them, were two sealed letters. Anne wondered why they had not been opened. She did not know that the superscription was in the hand of General Washington.

A drop glistened on Joe's rugged cheek as he stood looking silently at the master he had cared for so long. My Lord stirred and murmured and by some

trick of dulled senses spoke again the question the faithful servant had so often answered:

"Almost there, Joe?"

A sob came from Joe's throat. "Almos' dar, Mars' Torm!"

My Lord opened his eyes all at once and saw her, and to her surprise he spoke quite naturally and gladly.

"I have longed for you, my dear," he said, and held out a feeble hand. "Are you come alone, child?"

She kissed the withered hand and beckoned Armand, who came forward into the firelight and knelt by him. "We are wedded," she whispered.

"You!" he cried to him joyfully. "I knew they lied! I felt you would come back. You loved each other. I saw it, my children, long ago, at Williamsburg. She was very brave, Monsieur, as you are brave. You are fit for each other. I too," he said, "once . . "

He stopped, less it seemed to her from grief, than from a wish not to cast a shadow upon the happiness that she felt her face must show.

"I have nearly finished with this world," he said, "but I would I might live to see the cause triumph. Then I would be satisfied. Seven years—seven years, and the cursed rebellion still lasts!"

Neither Anne nor Armand spoke; in her heart was a great terror lest he should ask her too much.

"I have served my king," he went on, after a pause, "and they tell me now his cause is in peril. In peril! Virginia's soul disloyal! Virginia's hand raised against her sovereign! I never thought to live so long! And Washington—the lad I knew and loved so well—Washington the head and front of it! How he used to ride here about Greenway Court . . . he sat his saddle like Dick Steele —Dick the scholar—my mate, when we were troopers in the 'Blues!' Anne, where is George?"

She pressed his great, wasted palm to her cheek. "General Washington is still at York-town," she answered, in a scarce audible voice.

"At York-town? Still bearding Cornwallis? Has no fleet come yet to blow the rebels out?"

Anne scarce knew how to reply. "A fleet came, but it was the French."

"The French!" repeated the old man bitterly. "Aye, when the lion is sick, there gather the jackals! They take comfort of England's necessity to strike her in the back! Would I could fight again—these old hands should strike once more for my king!" He was silent and his knotted knuckles shook gauntly against the skins.

Later he looked up at her as she moved about the

room and smiled. "The old man wanted you," he said. "Stay as long as you can."

Next day he slept much of the forenoon and Anne and Armand talked low-voiced with the doctor on the porch. Down below them, curving past the knoll on which the lodge stood, ran the road to Winchester. As they sat talking, a long red line came marching up the slope from the spangled ford —a line of red-coats dotted here and there with an active spot of buff-and-blue. Anne leaned to look, and rose with a backward glance toward the door.

"The York-town prisoners come," she spoke in a hushed tone. "They march to the prison-pen at Winchester. He must not see them."

"He sleeps now," Armand answered. "Let us go to the foot of the hill."

The three walked down the twisting path. Along the edge of the high-road the prisoners had halted for a breath, their scarlet coats, so brave at York-town, now dust-stained and dull. The detachment of the Virginian line who guarded them, sat their horses, watchful and alert.

A spring babbled from the rocks a few yards above, to collect in a runnel by the roadway, and about this, roily and sandy as it was, the prisoners pushed and strove to drink from their hands. A word of pity came to Anne's lips; she stooped to

the spring, filled the cup that lay there and ran fleetly down, where one of the melancholy caravan sat on a boulder, his face in his hands, his whole attitude one of weariness and misery.

She touched his shoulder as she proffered the drink and he lifted his head, to leap to his feet and stare at her wildly, while she shrank back with a low-drawn exclamation.

It was Jarrat, and the branded, hopeless passion of the man, glutted with gall and wormwood, at sight of that face with Armand so near, blent in a last flare of waspish rage—a curse and a blow which sent the cup whirling. Frightened, she ran back.

Then, as Armand darted down, a guard spurred wrathfully up, sending his horse against Jarrat with a shock that drove him reeling to the center of the re-forming file. The rider turned, doffed his hat and waved his hand to her with a brave, boyish smile.

"The ugly brute of a Hessian!" rasped the doctor savagely. "Knew you the lieutenant, Mistress?"

"'Twas Francis Byrd of Westover," Anne answered. Then softly to herself: "Poor Frank!"

As they came up the path, she gave a cry of dismay. Joe was wheeling his master's couch out upon the porch into the autumn sunshine. "He has seen them!" she whispered to Armand.

So indeed he had. The torn red line had caught that keen gaze, so aged but unfilmed.

"Why . . ," he started in surprise. "'Tis the soldiers of the king! They are come! Lift me; lift my head higher, Joe!

"They are guarded," he said then, slowly; "guarded under arms! What means that?" His tone was amazement shot through with a piteous doubt.

At this, tears glistened on the girl's cheek. How should she tell him? "My dear, dear Lord!" she faltered, "York-town has fallen. Cornwallis has surrendered to General Washington."

The old baron's head turned on the skins.

"Fallen!" he cried in a terrible voice. "Fallen!"

He raised himself with difficulty upon his elbow.

"The armies of the South! 'Tis the failure of the Virginia campaign! 'Tis the end, then. The king's cause lost in America. Lost! And George . . my lad George, leading the rebels to the last? Heart of God!"

He put one hand, shaking, over his eyes that were so dim. The other lay in Anne's, and she was crying weakly above it. Armand's head was bowed and she could not see his face. The doctor had turned away.

My Lord seemed to realize that she was weeping.

"There, there," he said at last gently, drawing his hand from hers. "'Tis not for the young to sorrow, my dear. I am an old man—an old man, and the king has lost . . . Take me to bed now, Joe; 'tis time for me to die!"

Joe came forward and pushed the couch through the doorway and to his room. When he had been undressed, Anne came and sat by him while tears ran down Joe's face, in the shadow. But the baron never lifted his head again.

Once in the night they heard him stir, and Anne stole softly to the bed-side. He was muttering of dead days, of England and the old regiment of his youth—broken bits that she could not gather. Through the small hours of the morning his strength ebbed; they thought he would not rally.

But just as the first dawn paled on the eastern window he spoke—clearly and in a loud voice:

"That our Sovereign Lord is lawful and rightful King of this Realm and of all other His Majesty's Dominions and Countries thereto belonging . . . . To be true and faithful to the King and his heirs . . . . and truth and faith to bear of life and limb and terrene honour . . . . So help me God and His holy Evangelist!"

It was the oath of fealty of a peer of the realm.

He did not speak after that. The old *régime* was

passed, and he, too, was to pass out with the old *régime.*

A stanch heart and a true. Would we were all as gentle and as brave!

He lies buried beneath the chancel of the little parish church at Winchester, of which he was the first vestryman, and which is built on land that was gift of his bounty. The beautiful valley of the Shenandoah that he loved stretches wide and sweet about him, and not so far away ripples the shallow river across which he led his streaming hounds when he rode down for a week's hunting at Mt. Vernon.

Greenway Court stands tenantless above the river. The moonlight loves to steal away from clustering hamlets and waving, golden fields to silver its roof, and Indian summer strews its dusty glories on the empty porch to keep brilliant and tender the memory of his life in the Virginia woods, for those who read Virginia's past or love her present or trust her future.

There came a day, two months after my Lord Fairfax was gone out for the last time from Greenway Court, that Anne and Armand stood together and alone, in the deep-bordered garden of Gladden Hall. The old-time voices had come to it again and hope and care had repaired its wanton ruin.

Soft clouds ermined the mantle of sky and floated mirrored in the frosty blue river below them. A little waking wind was skurrying the falling leaves.

Their eyes dwelt upon each other in a gaze that was like speech. The spell of a deathless dream was upon them—their lives enfolded as their arms. He drew her to him and bent his head to her lips' soft flame.

"You will come back, soon—soon!" she said.

"Yes," he answered. "When peace is sure. And 'twill be soon now, thank God!"

"And then?"

He knew what she would have asked. A look of sadness came in his face.

"Then we shall live here—always—here in Virginia."

"Oh!" she breathed joyfully. "And France?"

"I have loved France!" he cried. "I have dreamed glorious sunset dreams of what she might become. But the dreams have passed. The storm is gathering over her—I see it, have heard it! Already the people look with hatred upon my order. They will sacrifice us when the time is ripe, without distinction—us who would have given our lives to help them. France is not yet ready for liberty. The blood of her best must flow first. To go back would be to lose life to no purpose. Here, and here

alone upon this earth, is Liberty! And to Liberty my life belongs!"

"To Liberty," she whispered, smiling, "to Liberty, and—to me!"

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